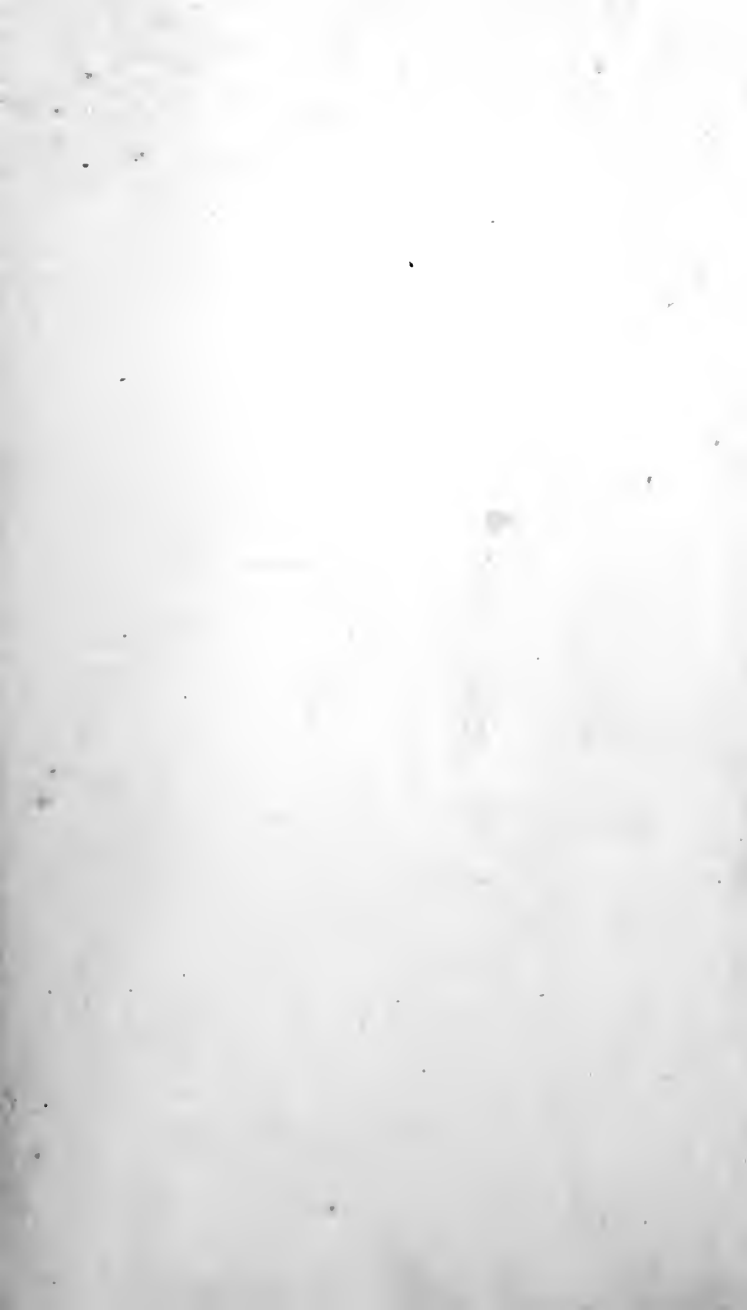




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VALENTIN.

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VALENTIN.

A

French Boy's Story of Sedan.

BY HENRY KINGSLEY,

AUTHOR OF 'GEOFFREY HAMLYN,' 'OLD MARGARET,' 'THE HARVEYS,'
'HORNEY MILLS,' ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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VALENTIN.

CHAPTER I.

I HAVE now come to the end of my long summer's holiday, and take an entirely new position before you. I am from henceforth no longer the wandering French boy, but the young French student. Your English judges, I see, always tell the jury entirely to dismiss from their minds the very facts which they have been thinking of for the last three weeks, in all probability; which seems to a Frenchman odd. I ask you, as a young English gentleman, to dismiss from your mind all that I have written to you previously. According to your

English law of jurisprudence, that is entirely logical. You are now to know nothing whatever of Mère Mathilde and Mère Terese, of Marie, of Jacques Cartier, of Mark. Still less are you to know anything whatever about Von Alvensleben, of the Archduke, of the Emperor, of Von Moltke, of Von Bismarck. You must dismiss these people from your minds altogether. I have told you about these people, but it is not in evidence. Writing for the English, I adopt the English course of procedure.

It was extremely wet on the night when Mark and I got back to Givonne. We did not arrive there until past eleven. My father, who had not expected us at all, was still up, and let us in. To my unutterable surprise he kissed Mark before he kissed me. Then he called for Jacques Cartier, who came half dressed out of the conciergerie, and he handed over Mark to the tender mercies of Jacques, saying :

‘ Get the boy some supper, and let him

sleep with you. Valentin, come to my study.'

My father might be stern, but he was never unkind. Yet I was a little afraid when he took me into his study counting-house, and ordered me to sit down. I feared that I had in some way offended him. I asked if my mother was well.

'She is not well, my pretty boy,' said my father; 'she and I are at variance on one matter, and she loves me and her country so well, that the little dispute has made her ill.'

When he called me 'pretty boy' (I am, as a matter of detail, not pretty at all), I knew that he was friends with me. I said,

'I am sorry that you are at variance with my mother, sir. Could I say no word to mend affairs?'

'Yes,' said my father, 'you *might* say a *word*; but it would have an entirely opposite effect. Now you must sit still, child, and be examined. Are you hungry?'

‘ Yes, sir.’

‘ Here is supper, then. Here is sausage, bread, and wine. Eat and answer. You cannot lie.’

I did both eat and answer.

‘ Have the Germans begun their star forts outside Luxemburg?’

‘ No, father; there is nothing beyond the glacis.’

‘ What asses!’ said my father, ‘ they are going to observe neutrality; lucky for them if the French do. Why, child,’ he continued, ‘ if either party respects the neutrality of that wretched little province in the struggle which is coming, the world will see an amount of chivalry and honour such as she has never seen before.’

I could not understand him then, but I can understand him now. Had the Archduke crossed that sacred territory, the matter would have been over sooner. Had the French, on the other hand, pushed across this territory and threatened the line of

German communication, then Sedan would not have been written down on the pages of history in blacker ink than Moscow, the passage of the Beresina, or Waterloo.

Allow me to detain you one moment more. Ever since the great Revolution, the French have distrusted their generals. As I write this, I hear that Bazaine and Urich are to be brought to court-martial. I am ashamed of my countrymen. Bazaine and Urich were two of the noblest fellows who ever lived. Neither of them could execute impossibilities. Bazaine, it appears, from these Messieurs of Versailles, ought to have '*broken out*.' Can a scorpion get through a ring of red-hot coals? I think not. After the glorious attempt of Gravelotte (which the Germans insist on confusing with the battle of St. Privat), Bazaine could never move. An English gentleman before Metz, for charitable purposes, tells me that on the 12th of September he might have made a successful dash at St.

Marie aux Chenes. That I believe is true ; but supposing he got through to Aubone and Briey, where was his line of communication, I beg of you ?

We must, however, attend to my father. My father said :

‘ Whom have you seen ?’

‘ The king.’

‘ Well, that is one matter. Who was with him ?’

‘ The Archduke Frederick Charles.’

‘ *Bon* ; and then again ?’

‘ Count Von Moltke.’

My father remained in thought.

‘ This looks very bad,’ he said. ‘ Was there any one else ?’

‘ Yes, one Count Von Bismarck.’

My father sat deep in thought, and then he said :

‘ I will go up and speak to your mother. Rouse Jacques Cartier, and tell him to have my horse ready in an hour.’

I was utterly puzzled. The king’s name,

the archduke's name, Von Moltke's name, were all as nothing at all. My father seemed sleepy and stupid until he heard the name of Von Bismarck, then he was utterly different. His face seemed to crystallise. He went upstairs to my mother, and remained with her an hour. When he came down he was dressed as for riding, with his English breeches and boots; and my mother, who was nearly crying, asked me if Jacques Cartier was ready.

I said he was. My father had the saddle-bags packed, and Jacques came in and took them away. Then my mother, my father, and I stood alone.

‘Good-bye, sweetheart,’ said my father.

‘Good-bye, well-loved,’ said my mother; ‘but O! one word more. Schneider, should you desert your country?’

‘What country?’ said my father, not, I am glad to say, angrily.

‘France,’ said my mother.

‘France,’ said my father ; ‘what is France to me?’

‘Your country.’

‘I do not see it. My money goes a long way the other side of the Rhine just now. Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. I have 300,000 francs in that bag, my love, and they will be in Frankfort in two days.’

‘But poor France, then,’ said my mother.

‘If poor France cannot get on without me, she must do without me,’ said my father. ‘Mind what I told you about the boy and the girl. I made my will, and have left it with you. If the boy fancies the girl, they must marry; let them marry as soon as possible. In two years they will be ready to marry.’

‘But, Schneider,’ said my mother, ‘these fiends have turned on the Austrians.’

‘How do you know?’

‘Here is the telegram,’ she said; and

she showed him the telegram which startled Europe.

My father stood in thought for a moment.

‘Why did you not show me this upstairs?’

‘I forgot it,’ was my mother’s feeble reply.

‘Well, I am for Frankfort,’ said my father. ‘I thought that we were to be taken first; we are to come second, it seems. Valentin!’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘Keep your wits about you, and answer. Did you see no one save the King, the Archduke, Von Bismarck, and Von Moltke?’

I thought, and said at last,

‘There was a little priest, who was watching them, a rather dirty little priest. I remember him now; he gave me ginger-bread.’

Jacques Cartier had come into the room

to say that my father's horse was ready, and Jacques spoke over my shoulder.

‘That would be Monseigneur Jubon, the Jesuit,’ he said.

And my father swore, or went very near it.

‘Don’t you see, monsieur,’ said Jacques Cartier, ‘that the object of these Germans is to puzzle us all? They make a most ostentatious demonstration on the French frontier just when they are going to attack Austria. When they are going to attack us they will probably raise a case against Serbia or Teheran.’ The worst of it is, that our Government is utterly hoodwinked. We could perfectly well take care of ourselves if we had a king, prince, or president, who ever heard a word of truth. Neither the Emperor nor the Empress ever does. You are going to Frankfort, I think, Monsieur?’

‘Yes.’

‘The best place you can go to, sir;

mind your money. Take this pass, and show it if any one stops you.'

'What is it?'

'Only a pass from the Carbonari,' said Jacques Cartier quietly.

'You will be guillotined some day,' said my father, putting the pass in his pocket.

'The only wonder is that I have never been guillotined before,' said Jacques Cartier. 'I would not give much for *your* neck, with that pass on you, in two years.'

'Will it be so long?'

'It will be longer,' said Jacques Cartier.

'Jacques,' said my father, 'if everything comes to the very worst, mind the boy. Valentin, whatever comes, remember that Jacques Cartier is your second father.'

My father rode away into the night, but what happened after we can only find out in part. He arrived safe at Frankfort, and

deposited his money with the Rothschilds there, that we know. Then we know that he took Mark with him; and what is more, took Mark to London and Paris. That he is alive we know perfectly well, or if he is not alive his ghost must be, because we are rich through his means. But from the night when he set out for Frankfort on the eve of Sadowa, we have seen very little of him.

He was always a strange and mysterious man. In my opinion, he thinks that he should not have deserted France in her need. I cannot say. He was a good man, and my father. Alive or dead, I will always love him.

Mark came back from London like a gentleman. No more bare legs now. My mother never would kiss Mark, though she liked him, and let us sleep together. One night in bed, Mark told me that he was in for the conscription. Three weeks after, Mark drew a low number, and was

ordered for service. Another three weeks and Mark came in on us, a glorious creature in scarlet breeches, blue coat, and white gaiters; 17th of the Line he was. As I write, I put his epaulet by my side now. Here is the writing on it: '17^e de L. 4^e. 69. 4409.'*

Well, I will say nothing more. Many other feet were turned up to the sky on that fearful day of judgment, but none so dearly loved as my brother Mark's.

* 17th de la Ligne.

CHAPTER II.

WELL, as I said, all was over with me. I was sent to the Lycée at Metz, whereas I wished to go to the Ecole Militaire. My father said, 'I will have no soldiers in the family. To the Lycée.' And so to the Lycée I went.

I had a beautiful new trunk, with everything which a French gentleman could wish for, but possibly not everything which an Eton young gentleman could wish for. The scale of luxury runs thus among school-boys. The Prussian has nothing; the French boy has more than he wants; and the English boy has more than he can possibly utilise. Why the other day I saw Lord Afterdale, who had just left Harrow, and he told me that his aunt, when he went

to that school, gave him a gun. Milor added to me in confidence, 'What the Dickens' (that, you remember, is the name of your great compatriot, by whom you swear, as our religious women do by the holy saints), 'what the Dickens,' he said to me, 'did the old fool think I could do with a gun at Harrow? The second master boned it, and used it himself.' I suggested that it was given him for purposes of self-defence, for we French are extremely spiritual, and, like an Irishman, are never at a loss for an answer. This theory, however, by no means met his views. In fact, I could see, in spite of all his politeness, that he thought me very little better than a young man deprived of understanding.

Such is your insular Chauvinism. It is amicable and amusing, as is ours. Take care that it does not bring you to the same miserable fate which we are undergoing—for a time.

The Lycée at Metz is pretty much like

all Lycées, and I rather think pretty much like most English schools. A strong boy, who is a gentleman, can get on by sheer strength of will. A weak boy, who is a gentleman, can get on by submission. A boy, who is neither strong nor a gentleman, has a very hard time of it. You do not know it, but we are more spiteful than you; yes, indeed, much more spiteful. A friend of mine was at school—a very rude school in London; he was a very gentle boy, and could not strike a blow hard enough to kill a bird. But he told me that he was not unhappy, for although he could hardly speak the language, the English boys, always brutally fighting among themselves, never laid a hand on him. Sometimes, he told me, they would dance in a savage and cannibal manner round him, but he soon got used to that. His father was an officer of Zouaves, and was killed at Inkerman. After this, my friend was fed carefully with buns and tartines. Yes, you English are

not unkind, though you may be brutal among yourselves.

Well, as I am here in England, and can tell you the whole truth in spite of M. Thiers, we French boys at school are quite as rough, and even more spiteful than you English boys. As I must go with you to the Lycée some time or another, I had better go now.

To do anything in our family without the assistance of Jacques Cartier was entirely impossible. Jacques has been sent over the frontier from Trèves, with a polite intimation that he was much safer on his own side of the border than on the German. The fact of the matter is that there was much more against Jacques, both on the French and German side, than we knew of. The truth is that the people I choose to call the Carbonari, are not particular. If they want a thing, they have a pestilent habit of taking it without leave. So *I rather suspect* that both Jacques Car-

tier and my brother Mark had rendered themselves subject to the action of the law which you call common law, in which case extradition might have been necessary. However, neither French nor Germans said one word about the matter, beyond telling Jacques Cartier and Mark to mind what they were about. And when all is said and done, the Prussians are the last people to complain about a few cocks and hens. A man must live. The story of the pig I quite disbelieve. Jacques tells me that he never saw the pig at all, but that he had pork for supper. Now I think that is a very fair explanation.

However, I must not delay in defending my dearest friend. Jacques was sent to see me to the Lycée at Metz, and one morning at ten he put down my box at the door, and rang. Then our troubles began.

The concierge opened the door, and unluckily knew Jacques.

‘Well, spy,’ he said, ‘are you on the

French or German side? which side has bought you now?’

Jacques shook his ten fingers in his face. Then he spat on both his hands, and then he boxed the ears of the concierge. I knew it was coming, but I would have died sooner than have spoken. Trying to conceal my laughter I passed into the courtyard, where nearly one hundred boys were in recreation.

The biggest of them, ‘cock of the school,’ you would call him, came towards me. ‘What do *you* want?’ he said.

‘Monsieur le Président,’ I said. ‘I am a new pupil.’

‘What is your name?’ he said, and I saw that I must hold my own with him, for he was a *mauvais sujet*—a fat, gross, sensual young fellow, of about eighteen. Now I wish to tell you something. When any of you young English gentlemen meet a young fellow of this sort, and when he says to you anything insulting or prurient, hit him in

the mouth at once, and you will never hear from him again. Of course, it is not pleasant for me to write these words, but pray attend to them. If a fellow like the one I describe says anything which you could not say to your mother, smite him. You say he would thrash you. Well, *be thrashed* ; but before all, keep your honour. France has been beaten by Germany, but I do not think that any man in Europe will say that we have lost our honour.

I was like David to Goliath with this young man ; but then, do you see, I was in love and pure, whereas he was neither. I have seen the same animal reproduced in Germany and in England. As I answered him, my love for my darling was tingling in my veins.

‘What right have you to ask my name? I will give it; I am Valentin Schneider.’

‘He is a German boy, this one,’ said Leon; and the others gathered round him.

‘You lie,’ I said; ‘I am as good a

Frenchman as you ; and the boy who says I am not, had better not say so twice.'

Leon saw that he must act at once. He seized me by my cravat. I, on the other hand, hit him on the mouth, tripped his right foot with my left, and fell upon him, I regret to say, with my knees together. You must never do that ; it is too dangerous for an ordinary quarrel ; it is apt to end in rupture of the colon. Pray never do it. Jacques showed the trick to Mark, and Mark showed it to me. I write it down because it is the *least* dangerous of the fighting tricks which the Carbonari know. An old patriarch said to me once when I asked him about the use of the dagger, 'Our *boys* can kill any *man*. But the English do not know anything about fighting at all.'

I did not kill my fat friend, however. He did not even go to the *infirmierie*, because, do you see, the diet there is carefully kept down, lest a boy should 'put on

æger,' as an Oxford man expressed it to me.

The Maître d'Ecole and the President came flying out in their dressing-gowns, and I expected discipline. But no; I was young Schneider, and young Schneider seemed to be a sacred person. Leon was forbidden to go out next Sunday, and two other messieurs had sixty lines a-piece because they had looked on without assisting me—a thing I thought grossly unjust, because I had assisted myself. It was very much like the courts-martial on Uhrich and Bazaine.

The concierge got terribly scolded for insulting Jacques Cartier; not one word was said about Jacques having boxed his ears. Jacques and I had wine (awfully bad; he *said* it was Medoc) with the President. And I was left at Metz—with a few kisses from Jacques, in exchange for which I sent some to Mark—in a burning hot fury of love, longing to distinguish myself, but seeing no chance. Only a civilian.

CHAPTER III.

I do not like a man who will speak badly of his father. I only say that I *think* I should not have done as my father has done. In my opinion Alsace is as much French as Ireland is English.

But he was and is a good father to me, and so I say nothing. If he had known Mark, things would have been quite different. If I think that he failed in patriotism, I ask you why? Simply because he wanted to get money for me!

Would I have done it myself? No, not *then*. I would not have done it on any account at all. I would most certainly have held every farthing in France at that time. I do not know *now*, I cannot say what I should do now.

You see that my father was not alone in the world.

My father's property was situated in the debatable region, and he knew that ruin would come to one side or another; and whichever way the ruin went, he had to calculate on his chances.

He was not alone in the world; he had my mother and myself to provide for. So he sent out Jacques Cartier who might lie, and myself who could *not* lie, to tell him various things, which even his friends the Jews of Frankfort could not tell him. (Hah! Herr Judenstrasse, you lost *your* money; you believed in the French, did you? when we win you will believe in the Germans, and lose it again.) My father after hearing my report, more particularly after my interview with the Archduke and King, sold the larger part, nearly all, of his French property, and invested it partly in Bavaria and partly in the English funds.

Unpatriotic, yes. But my father's theory

was that domestic needs ranked above patriotic. He saved his fortune and gave Gambetta 250,000 francs out of it. You see he had a wife and a son. I was very angry with him for a time, but——

Were you ever wakened by the whimpering of a child? Did you ever in your first sleep wonder where you were, and putting out your hand find that it was among the long silken tresses of your wife's hair on the pillow? Did you ever feel the little waxen fingers of the baby pulling at your moustache? No! well, then, wait until you have, before you rate your patriotism. Your sweetheart will tell you to go and die; your wife will tell you to go and live.

I have spoken before about the behaviour of this fearful Landwehr, whom we could not face. They were married men with children, separated by the inexorable laws of Germany from their wives. That is the reason why they fought more like devils

than men; they wanted to get back to their wives.

When did the Northern American States begin to win? Unless History lies more than usual, she would say, 'When the married men were called out.'

My father was not in any way a fighting man. He was a financier. He withdrew his right, like Vinoy, at this time for the sake of my mother and myself. Do I blame him? No. He was as much German as French, and he took the German side, and sold out in France.

I wished afterwards that he had taken the side I took, that is, the French side. I believe that if he had known that Mark was alive and his son, things might have been different. For Mark was such a glorious creature, that I believe my father would have preferred him to me. And Mark was an unreasoning Chauvinist. It was not to be.

I had not been a fortnight at Metz when my father came to see me.

‘So you fought your comrades on the first day, pretty boy.’

‘I only fought Leon.’

‘Here are two napoleons for you; and so you are in love, eh!’

I answered roundly ‘Yes.’

‘That is good,’ he said; ‘that is very good. I am in love with your mother at this present moment. You hold to this love, my dear boy. I have seen her, and she is worthy of you or of any boy. Would you like to see her?’

‘What would I not give to see her, sir?’

‘Would you give up your allegiance to France?’

‘No, sir; I am a Frenchman, and will die one.’

‘Bravely answered,’ said my father; ‘I, for my part, am not a Frenchman. But as regards the girl, she is here. I have put her with the Huguenot sisters to be educated, and you are to see her alone on

Thursday and Sunday for two hours. Will that suit you ?

I began some rapturous nonsense.

‘Yes, yes!’ he said; ‘that is the sort of rant I used to talk to your mother. Now be good, keep pure, and work hard. That is all I have to say to you.’

‘Not all, sir. There are some scholarships for the Ecole Militaire. May I win one?’

‘They carry a commission,’ said my father, walking up and down the room.

‘Yes.’

He walked up and down again frowning, in thought. At last he said,

‘I have given up everything for you. You are the only one I have in the world. If you win one of these you will be fighting in two years.’

‘Yes.’

‘And against Germany?’

‘Yes.’

There was one wild sob, and then he said quite gently,

‘Do it if you can. I yield. Can you tell me where that boy Mark is?’

‘No, sir.’

Suddenly he caught me by the two shoulders, and said, ‘Valentin, turn your eyes on mine.’

I did so.

‘They *are* the same eyes,’ he said; ‘yet the whole thing is too utterly improbable. Valentin.’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘When you meet that boy, treat him as your own brother.’

‘I have always done so, sir,’ I replied; and my father went away.

I have often wondered whether Jacques Cartier knew the truth. I think not, for he loved Mark as I did. 1200 francs would have saved Mark.

CHAPTER IV.

MATTERS began to go with wonderful rapidity. I worked very hard, and on Sundays and Thursdays I saw Marie.

My darling was always the same to me. She urged me on, and I worked for her and for France. 'Get the scholarship at the Ecole Militaire,' she said; and the boys said, 'This young Schneider is *fiancé*.' I was treated with great respect.

On Thursday and on Sunday I used to take her away as far as St. Privat, Malmaison, or Amandvilliers. We would sit in the woods alone, and watch the great cathedral, like a ship among a sea of woods, but a ship which never sailed.

Once I asked the good sisters if she might go to Luxemburg with me. They

asked the bishop, and the bishop, to our great delight, said, 'Yes, we might go.' We French, do you know, are more free and innocent in our manners than you English.

That was a delightful journey. I took her first-class by Thionville and Bettemburg right into Luxemburg. Well, what we said by the way is just no matter at all. She went to her own people on the glacis, and I put a cigar in my mouth in the evening, and went into the town through the trees, meaning to go to the Café de l'Europe.

Well, you will conceive my surprise. There were no sentinels, and, going in by the north gate, it seemed to me that the place had undergone bombardment. The scarp was down, and was half filling up the ditch. I could not in the least understand matters. I looked round for a Prussian sentry, and I only saw a nice-looking young man in a gray uniform. I exercised myself.

I spoke to that young man. His instincts were extremely French.

‘What has happened here?’ I asked.

‘Do you not know, then?’

‘In France we know nothing; at our Lycée newspapers are forbidden, unless they contain false news. For me, I have been working so hard at mathematics, fortification, and love-making, that I know nothing at all.’

The Luxemburger whistled. ‘Then you do not know that the Prussians are gone?’

‘This is the first word I ever heard of it,’ I replied, and passed on.

At the Café de l’Europe I heard everything. Napoleon III. had tried to buy Luxemburg from the Dutch. The Prussians had defied him to take it. Both parties had withdrawn their claims. France was livid with suppressed anger, and Prussia was red with wrath. Boy as I was, I saw that it must come now; but, boy as I was, I believed that we should win. No

one anticipated our ruin. I most certainly did not, and thought my father a fool. Remember that the wise Germans cut down the trees on the glacis of Cologne, believing that they could not stop us short of that place.

Who was to blame? Well, the losing nation. He who breaks pays. But if Niel had lived, things might have been very different. We pay for everything, we French. At a cost of about six hundred millions sterling, we have just proved to the world that a *levée en masse* is no use whatever now, and that all the old Republican traditions are pure balderdash. Why, Von der Tann had no more than fourteen thousand men before Orleans. Look at Gambetta; if ever a man raised a nation, he did so. Look at the result.

I did not in the least degree like the withdrawal of the Prussians from Luxemburg. It seemed to me to be a very ugly move at chess. I was saying so openly at

the Café de l'Europe (where every one is French), when I looked up and saw my father and mother.

I went to him at once. 'I am not dissipating, sir,' I said.

'I know that,' he answered. 'Your mother and I have kept you well in sight. I am going to say something very strange to you. Come with me and your mother into the next room.'

I rose and followed them.

'Valentin,' said my father, 'you have been a good boy to us, and we love you very dearly.'

I remember the trifling blush which came on my face as I answered, 'I have done my best, sir.'

My father went on. 'You do not know what has happened to you, I suppose?'

I said, 'No.'

'What did you think of your papers at the Ecole Militaire at Metz?'

'I thought them very bad, sir.'

‘You have gained the first scholarship, which carries a commission, and also the sword of honour for mathematics.’

The room seemed to reel round with me. I had worked so very hard, but I had never expected anything like that.

My father went on, ‘I am glad that my son is a worthy boy, but I think I would have been more glad had he been on the other side. However, my dear, we will not quarrel on that point. You will have the red breeches on in a week, and I hope you won’t die in them, for I love you. Boy, I want to tell you something more. Let me feel your pulse. That is right,’ he said. ‘Valentin, will you obey me?’

‘Yes, sir, to the death.’

‘Valentin, will you be married to-morrow?’

‘Only to one girl, sir.’

‘I know. Are you prepared for that?’

I will tell you why I was silent. No, I cannot tell you why I was silent. My joy

was so unutterable that I remained silent. Put it that way. I knew no more about marriage than the man in the moon. I only knew that, if the priest said certain words, I could call her my own for ever. I said, 'Yes.'

'I want you to be married to-morrow,' said my father. 'Monseigneur will manage the matter before ten; the train for Metz starts at a quarter past two. You will not see anything of your bride for a year or so. She will live at Fond de Givonne with us.'

Monseigneur performed the ceremony; but I am sorry to say that I missed my train, and never got to Metz until late the next day.

CHAPTER V.

THEN I put on the red breeches, and I should very much like to write an essay on red breeches, only the Editor says he won't stand any nonsense. The Editor is wrong in this matter; he is more than wrong, he is insular. The best thing which you English have produced since Shakespeare is *Sartor Resartus*, all about clothes. I propose an essay on red breeches to the Editor, and he says no. However, the loss is his, not mine. He does not see that the red breeches which he laughed at under the empire were the same which lay strewn in heaps at Sedan and St. Privat. Yet he is right again. Laugh and forget.

Well, the red breeches are not disgraced so far. Why, even those miserable Com-

munists fought very well. They gave us terrible trouble, I can tell you. They fought with the halter round their necks; but in all countries, I can tell you, a man with a halter round his neck does not of necessity fight well. These miserable dogs, on the other hand, fought very well. I am not going so far with you as the Rue St. Honoré, that I beg of you to understand. But I can tell you that it was only by superior discipline that we won. You see, as regards us, *la ligne*, the Emperor had our *consecutive time*. Do you understand? We had been three years at it; they had not been three months. I doubt for my own part whether one single Communist regiment could have marched by subdivisions round its centre; yet they fought well.

So I take you to Metz. Well, I take you to Metz in one way, but not in another. I cannot tell you all about Metz; it was very ill and bad. No nation could

go on long with such a garrison town as that. I could tell you things about Metz which would horrify and disgust you. Things were going on in Metz which have never gone on in England. English and German officers have told me that places which existed in Metz were unknown elsewhere. An English officer from Bengal told me that the Nautch of India was not so bad as things he saw at Metz; I should think it could not be worse. Young Delfroy took me to one of those places. I looked on for one instant, and then I struck him in the mouth. I knew that we must fight on the morrow, but I did not care. He had not insulted me, he had insulted Marie.

His man came to me that night. Alphonse le Roy had made me go to bed, because he said that you must sleep well before a duel. He was sitting on my bed, and we were arranging all about the duel, when Lieutenant d'Aurilliac came in and sat on the bed also.

‘My man is in bed, too,’ he said. ‘What time do you propose, Le Roy?’

‘After parade, I suppose,’ said Le Roy.

‘That will suit me exactly,’ I said; ‘for I must write to my wife and tell her that I have struck a Frenchman.’

They stared at me in astonishment for a moment; but before they had time to speak they stared more. I started up in bed, and they looked round.

Standing behind them was an old powerfully built man, very square in features, and of tremendous physical power. I was very much startled, because I had never seen such a man before, and his look was, though stern, one of intense pity.

D'Aurillac and Le Roy rose at once, and Le Roy said,

‘General Changarnier.’

So I had seen him at last, the glorious old Republican hero, and with a smile upon his face. I would have kissed his feet, but he spoke sternly to me.

‘Valentin Schneider, you are contemplating a duel to-morrow?’

‘Yes, my General; I have struck a French officer.’

‘A good excuse. Do you think nothing of your wife, then?’

‘They do not know here that I am married.’

‘That is no answer. D’Aurilliac and Le Roy, did you know that he was married?’

‘Married!’ said D’Aurilliac; ‘why, he is a child.’

‘A child in innocence, a man in position. Delfroy, come in.’

Delfroy came in. ‘I have come to apologise,’ he said. ‘How could I guess?’

I told him not to say one word more, on his life.

General Changarnier said, ‘We must have no duels, my boys. There will be duel enough soon to suit all of you. Listen to me. Respect that lad Schneider’s inno-

cence and purity. I am mistaken if he will be in the rear on the day of judgment for the sins of France.'

Said Le Roy, 'Name that day, General.'

And General Changarnier paused a moment, and then he wrote a word on a piece of paper, and put it in an envelope.

'You, Le Roy, are of the Engineers. Well, I trust this to you for one year. After that, open it and read it.'

A year afterwards we did so. Only one word was written, and that was,

'Briey.'

How near he was being right! No one ever heard about that marvellous little town before the late Versailles courts-martial. The dear little place was absolutely untouched; and a war correspondent tells me that they made a little heaven of it while the guns at St. Privat, six miles off, were roaring like Vesuvius. Now, forsooth, the Versaillists say about our glorious Bazaine

that he should have made another attempt to get to Briey after Gravelotte. Whither was he to have gone afterwards? And with 200,000 men hanging on his flanks.' Did Changarnier know nothing? Say Bazaine was a fool; you will hardly go as far as to say that Changarnier was one. I think that even you will hardly go as far as that. The defence of Metz was as well done as it could be done. I have more to say on that point, perhaps enough to fill the whole of this volume ten times over; but the Editor is the most inexorable. It remains, however, that General Changarnier stopped my first duel for me.

I have noticed a tender gentle sentiment about my countrymen which, you will forgive my saying so, I have not noticed in yours. It got about, in that *enfer* on earth Metz, that I, though only a boy, was married. From the time when General Changarnier stopped that duel, I never heard one word uttered willingly before

me which Marie herself might not have heard. Our people like romance, and here was a little romance for them, illustrated, if I may be allowed a *calembourg*, with cuts by General Changarnier—cuts at the state of military morality at Metz.

I must tell you that I was kept at headquarters there for a whole year, working hard at my profession, without any communication, save by letter, with wife, father, mother, or any of my old friends. I worked like a horse; I gained my grade as lieutenant, and then I wrote to my father, asking if I might come and see my bride. The answer was in one word—

‘No.’ But there was more than that in the letter. He said, ‘Niel, Trochu, and Vinoy are coming your way next week. You must be there.’

How on earth did he know this? I thought; and I went to General Changarnier. I told the dear old man everything, and I asked him whether I was

justified in obeying my father under such circumstances. I was married, I said, and I wanted to see my own wife.

‘I think,’ said the General, ‘that you had much better obey your father. How old are you?’

‘Nineteen, General.’

‘Pretty boy; and you love one another still?’

‘I would die for her, and she for me.’

‘Ah! Well, take an old man’s advice. How long was I separated from my darling? Between four and five years at one time. Surely you, Valentin, with a pure love and high hopes, can for her sake bear the separation of a year. Is this a time for a Frenchman to talk about love-making?’ he continued passionately. ‘No. Obey your father.’

I did so to a limited extent.

At six o’clock the next morning the drums and horns announced the arrival of Niel, Trochu, and Vinoy. The guard turned

out all right, and the regiment was ordered for parade at eight.

I was not officer of the guard, and was making myself spruce for parade, when the officer of the guard rushed into my quarters, cast his shako on the ground, and said,

‘We are all ruined.’

‘Why so?’

‘The Colonel has got a terrible hæmorrhage from that wound which he got in the Crimea. The Adjutant can’t move on his bed. You, as junior lieutenant, must act as adjutant. Have you got a pistol?’

‘Yes; why?’

‘Lend it to me, and let me blow my brains out.’

‘Bah!’ I said; ‘we will get through it quite right.’

In fact, the men turned out nobly. Our Colonel was one of the best of men and of martinets. The Adjutant was not what

he might have been; but the Colonel had got the machine in such perfect order, that it would *go*. I had really very little to do. Parade is so absolutely perfect in French regiments, that I rather wondered at an inspection by three such very famous generals. There was really no inspection at all.

I was called up and I saluted.

‘Give me the numbers of your companies, sir,’ said Marshal Niel, ‘from your books.’

I did so. I was ready enough at that.

‘First company 183, rank and file, and—’

‘Never mind the officers, sir,’ said Vinoy; ‘there are always plenty of them. Number them,’ he said to me.

I did so; there were 67 all told.

‘How many in hospital?’ said Trochu.

I looked at my hospital book; there were 19.

‘Number your second company, sir,’ said Niel.

I did so. The nominal number was 163, and the actual men present were 68.

I had done my duty, and I heard what Niel said. He said:

‘This regiment, nominally 1800 strong, has not 900 men in it. And Gambetta abuses me because I want to make France strong.’

At this moment an orderly rode up and said to Marshal Niel, ‘Colonel Delafont is dead, sir.’

‘Another of the old school gone, Vinoy. I suppose that wound in the thigh killed him?’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘I shall be the next,’ said Niel. ‘Young gentleman,’ to me, ‘you have done your work very well. Tell General Changarnier, who suffers from some strange epidemic whenever I come near him, that you are a good boy. I will take your name, for you

seem a good officer, you are not *toujours en café*, I'll be bound ; but you are very young, you are a mere boy. Take an old soldier's advice—leave the French army, and get married when you are old enough.'

'I have been married already over a year, Marshal. And, as for the French army, I intend to die in it.'

That was the last of Marshal Niel. Had he lived there would have been no Sedan. He was the first to find out that our battalions existed only on paper.

The Emperor believed in them, and dashed on Prussia. But the real destroyers of France were the radicals in the Assembly, who so persistently opposed Marshal Niel.

I should like to tell off the English army as I did my regiment. Von der Tann had 14,000 men before Orleans, and 14,000 only. *But then they were all on the spot.* It is so with German armies. But it seems to me, with regard to English and French

regiments, that, for some unexplained reason, at least one-third of the nominal force is either somewhere else, or does not exist at all.

CHAPTER VI.

You know perfectly well, if you are a soldier, that your father can forbid you to come home; while, on the other hand, your commanding officer may give you leave to *go* home, and, in point of fact, will *order* you to go home, and save hospital expenses if there is anything the matter with you, and if your home is near. I told Colonel Barbot that I was ill, and wanted to go home, but that my father had forbidden me to do so. He at once took out a large book, rang the bell for the doctor, and then tapped the table with his forefinger while he was waiting for the doctor's arrival. We were very precise in those times—some say too precise; but if precision of a certain kind would have saved

Sedan, we most certainly should have saved it. When I was a prisoner, I found that they were more precise than ourselves, confound them ! In Mark's petit livret which I took from him, he was credited with *one sock*. He seems to have lost the other before it was paid for. How on earth a man can have a bill, even a washer-woman's bill, sent in to him for 'one sock,' I cannot understand at all. Still, we were very precise.

Colonel Barbot would not in any way speak to me until the doctor came. I remarked to him that the weather seemed likely to be fine. He replied that the weather was no business of a lieutenant's, it was the care of the Marshal of France.

He sat drumming on the table and smoking, until the doctor came. Dr. Bouche we always called him, though his name was Chateaurouge. He knew my complaint as well as he knew my story. The colonel knew both things perfectly

well; but we were at that time the most precise army in the world.

‘This young gentleman says he is ill, and wants furlough,’ says the colonel. ‘Will you give me your opinion?’

Our dear doctor was as precise as any one. He made me take off my shirt before the colonel, and put his ear to my chest.

‘Precordial anxiety acting on the heart,’ he said, and I put on my shirt again while the colonel wrote it down.

‘What do you recommend?’ said the colonel, and he wrote that down also.

‘I should recommend a slight furlough—say four weeks,’ said the doctor.

‘Well, that is granted,’ said the colonel (who wrote that down also, and made the doctor and I sign it). ‘I have great pleasure in granting furlough to Lieutenant Schneider, because he is one of the finest young men I have, and yet I regret extremely that I shall miss his services. It is evidently necessary that he should retire

for a month; and while we are at it, doctor, I want you to examine me, for I am in extremely poor health.'

French discipline will not always stand fire. Both the doctor and I burst into laughter. I do not know which was the most absurd part of the farce which followed—the utter impudence of that claim on the part of Colonel Barbot (eighteen stone of Brittany, with never an ache in his body save from Algerian and Crimean wounds), or the cool way in which he slipped off his shirt, and requested the doctor to examine his heart.

Yet it was not a thing to laugh at in any way. He was sixty-one years of age, and those massive steel-clothed ribs had borne themselves well from Leipsic to Inkerman. The doctor stethoscoped him, and I saw while he was stripped that his body was scarred and seamed in every direction.

I said, 'My colonel, may I look at your wounds?'

‘Yes, boy.’

I laid my hand on his fore-arm, cut in every direction, with white livid wales across and across. I never saw such an arm, save that of your own Jones, V.C., who put it to himself that he must save one of his own privates, and who did so. I said to Colonel Barbot:

‘What is this?’

He said:

‘Dresden, when I was a child like yourself. I was a drummer-boy.’

One long livid cut went across his breast; I put my finger on it, and looked into his face.

‘Passage of the Beresina,’ he said. ‘The present Madame Barbot was old enough then to be vivandière, and I to be in love with her. By heavens! boy, they were close on us there. I was close to her all through that, and the Cossacks thought she was a boy, and cut her over the shoulder. In the mêlée, before we got over the

bridge, I got that cut over the breast. I got my revenge at Inkerman.'

'And this wound, sir?' I said, putting my hand on his hip.

'Alma,' he said brightly. (You English will never say 'Alma' in the proper way.)

And then the doctor came in on us, and he said:

'I find that you, like Lieutenant Schneider, are suffering from precordial anxiety. I consider that you had better go to Madame Barbot at Carignano for at least a fortnight. You, M. Schneider, must go to Sedan for at least a month.'

'How he orders us about, this one!' said the colonel savagely. 'We might as well be the mud under his feet. An English sergeant-major and a French doctor command their regiments.'

'Well, I can only say,' said the doctor coolly, 'that you are both suffering from the same complaint, and if you wish to

appeal against my decision, you had better sign the form now, and have done with it.'

'I shall go,' said the colonel.

'I suppose that I had better go also,' I said.

I wrote and told my father that the doctor had ordered me home on a month's furlough. He was very angry, I fear. The diligence was late, and then I had to walk; so when I came to my father's house, I found no one to receive me except Marie, no supper save what she gave me, and no bed for me to be in save hers.

CHAPTER VII.

I AM professedly writing for boys, and I would not write one word which would bring a blush on a boy's face ; yet I will say this, that one day in a good boy's life he will have an announcement made to him by one of the other sex, dearer than father or mother, which will make his face crimson with unutterable joy.

She will not say many words, my boy, but you will understand them; and then woe betide the man who lays hands on her or on you. You may talk about meeting a bear deprived of her cubs; I daresay that is dangerous. For my own part, I never killed but one bear, and there was a violent dispute as to who had killed him. He knocked me head over heels, and I rammed

my knife into him; but, being a male bear, I do not think that he cared much for his cubs. But I would sooner meet a hundred she-bears without a cub among them, than one young gentleman to whom a girl has said the three words in French or the four in English.

And the whole thing is so perfectly pure, that the ultramontane priests dare say nothing about it. They sprinkle the child with holy water, and I hope that it does the child good. They have dared much those ultramontanes, but they have never dared to put a young father against a young wife at first. They are wise.

I ramble in my speech like a real Frenchman. Thiers and Gambetta, they never ramble, of course. Nothing has been wrong in France save the Prussians and the latter empire, according to them. Well, I can hardly agree with them. An English gentleman whom I know well told me, that the prurient and stupid talk among English

schoolboys was as bad as bad could be. Of course, being both gentlemen, and grown up, we were unable to compare notes, and let the loathsome business alone. I can only say that, if your English schools are as bad as our French schools, they had better be broken up. There are one hundred and fifty things which boys may talk about ; why on earth do they choose to talk about the one hundred and fifty-first?

Well, I know what you are (I correct myself, *you* are a gentleman). I know what an ordinary boy says about a certain kind of talk. I say to that ordinary boy that I have no argument, only advice. When a boy begins that nonsense, hit him immediately in the eye. You will soon stop it.

You have no right to listen to anything which your sister might not hear. What would you do to a boy who made a black-guard of himself before your sisters? Your sister is as sacred to you as your wife.

What would be done in France to a man who insulted his own wife?

Well, the three French words did not come to me for a long time. I worked very patiently, and I found out many things. One thing was that our army was kept entirely in the dark about affairs — nay, about all things ; and the other thing was, that Trochu reported me as a very smart young officer. I consequently was moved from pillar to post. I passed for the staff, and then I was at Belfort, at Toul, at Châlons, everywhere but at Sedan. So a year passed, and Niel died. With him, France.

Niel had been dead a long time, it seemed to me, when I had to go to Châlons from Stenay. I rode like the—your patron saint the Dickens—and I met a rather old General on the outside of the line with a boy beside him, both on horseback.

I saluted, and would have ridden past, when D'Aurelles de Paladine, who was with

this rather old General, called to me, 'Halt, démontez et découvrez.'

Then I saw the EMPEROR.

I made every earthly or unearthly apology to him, but he only laughed. To my unutterable astonishment, he said :

'You are young Schneider of Sedan?'

'Yes, your Majesty.'

'Your father has gone on the other side,' said the Emperor. 'I think that a pity; but he knows his own business best. You are, however, entirely French; at least so he tells me.'

Here I must break off to inform you that none of us know what the connection between my father and the Emperor was. My wife said that it dated from London in 1847, but we none of us know at all.

'I am entirely French at heart, your Majesty. I would blow my brains out at this moment for France.'

'Yes! But we will postpone the immolation for a few weeks. I have something

to say to you. You are, I think, connected with the Carbonari in the Ardennes?

The Tempter suggested a large 'Yes,' and a very large 'No;' but my good angel suggested a very large 'Yes,' and I uttered it.

'After that "yes,"' said the Emperor, 'I see that I can get no information from you at all. We want unbribable men, and we have got one in you. I wish to do something for you.'

The Prince Imperial here rather interfered with matters by getting off his horse, and whispering to me:

'Give me your geraniums.'

I, of course, did so.

'Now you can pin on your cross,' said the Prince Imperial.

The next moment the Emperor gave me the cross of the Legion of Honour of the third class. Ha! you English laugh at it if you like, but which among you has got it? I was bought that day.

The Emperor said, 'I wish to ask you to speak to a young man, a sergeant, who knows you.'

I bowed.

A *chasseur à pied* came before me. I looked on his face for one moment, and then I fell on his neck and he on mine, in the French manner.

It was Mark.

Another *chasseur à pied* came up, and it was Jacques Cartier.

'You see that I know some of your treasons, Schneider,' said the Emperor. 'I know all about Mère Mathilde also. Come away with me.'

I went dismounted, and talked to him as he sat on his horse. Old Pelissier said, 'S'il monte au cheval nous sommes perdus.' He was on horseback now. Pity that such a really grand fellow was so befooled by a third-rate woman.

'I could guillotine your two friends,' he said.

‘Without doubt, sir, and me with them.’

‘But you are not of the International.’

‘Me! I am Orleanist.’

‘That is a comfort. Boy, your two friends know every path through the Ardennes.’

‘Yes; but, sire, the Germans know them better.’

‘Can you go to the extreme south—to Esch?’

‘Of course; but I would rather be nearer Libramont.’

‘I would sooner you went to Esch.’

‘I am under orders, sire. Must I go to Esch at once?’

‘No. Do you want furlough for a fortnight?’

‘Sire,’ I said, ‘I have been married more than a year, and I have not seen my own wife more than a month. A man could do no more for France than that.’

‘Nothing will do anything for France,’

said the Emperor. 'We'll see. Where is your wife, boy? You shall go to her, but only for a fortnight. Where is she?'

I answered, 'Sire, at Sedan.'

CHAPTER VIII.

THAT glorious stormy petrel Bourbaki came down on us one morning, and I heard him say to Colonel Barbot, 'Hein, hein, j'ai mes soupçons.' Colonel Barbot declared that he had also his suspicions, but I had not the wildest idea what these suspicions were.

Bourbaki said, 'You had better go to Strasburg, it seems to me;' and Colonel Barbot said, 'I suppose so;' and added, 'Will they break in on us by Colmar?'

'We shall be at Cologne by then,' said Bourbaki; 'we cannot fail to turn their left.'

But all this, do you see, was Greek to me.

'Have you a smart officer?' said Bourbaki.

‘No,’ said Colonel Barbot.

‘Not one?’

‘Not one. Stay, there is a boy from Sedan, Schneider by name, who is very clever,’ and he called me up.

‘Monsieur,’ said Bourbaki, ‘I wish you to go to Strasburg.’

‘Sir,’ I said, ‘I think that the Emperor wished me to go to Esch.’

‘The child is right,’ said Barbot. ‘This child is married, and has been with his wife now twice. This child knows also the Ardennes, and is connected with the Carbonari.’

‘I beg your pardon, General, I am not connected with them,’ I said. ‘I am an Orleanist, and not a Revolutionist.’

‘It is the same thing,’ said Colonel Barbot. ‘But you know the passes of the Ardennes?’

‘Yes.’

‘What are we to do with this child who is married?’ said Barbot.

Bourbaki looked at me very keenly

before he answered; then he said suddenly:

‘Will you swear to die for France?’

‘Yes, sir.’

‘Very well, then. Go to Luxemburg and examine the frontier.’

‘Yes, sir.’

Here there was an interruption. We were talking in a small room at a place called Briey; we heard the clatter of swords on the stones. The door was thrown open, and Mademoiselle Sophie announced,

‘General Uhrich.’

The defender of Strasburg—the hero of our age stood before me. A very gentleman, with moustaches slightly longer than the pattern of the Algerian officers. I said to myself, ‘I would go to the death after that man.’

Can you conceive the infernal villany of some of our nation? They seem to me to match those who shoot at the Queen in your nation. For my part, I say fairly

that for rascality we can in France match the Fenians in England. I do not talk about the Communists: their minds were abused, and, moreover, they were excited; and when a Frenchman is excited, he is not to be trusted. But I wish to point out this, that our glorious hero Uhrich has had to demand courts-martial for his defence of Strasburg.

France is getting rotten through Chauvinism; England has been rotten from the same cause long ago. Yet England shows signs of repentance; France none. The Prussians are going in for Chauvinism now. Their time is to come. The Americans went in for it from the first; but, as they are three thousand miles from any civilised country except Canada, and as they do not want Canada, and could not get Canada if they did, it does not particularly matter.

Uhrich spoke.

‘I am going to Strasburg. Who is this pretty boy, then? Can he be trusted? I

should like a boy to go with me to Strasburg. What sword is that you have, child?

‘Sword of honour for mathematics, my General,’ I said.

‘Good,’ said Uhrich. ‘I want the route. Can you give it me?’

‘Whither?’ I asked, in a puzzle.

‘To Metz first.’

I said, standing up before the dear old fellow, like a school-boy—

‘Aubone, four kilometres; St. Marie aux Chenes, five kilometres; St. Privat, three kilometres; Jercesalem, one kilometre.’

Uhrich had got on his horse, but, to my surprise, he got off again. He said to Bourbaki—

‘Can we trust this boy?’

Bourbaki said, ‘He is married.’

‘All the better,’ said Uhrich, ‘he will not lie. Boy, will you lie?’

‘No, sir.’

‘Can you go to the Emperor?’

‘If I am sent, sir.’

Uhrich looked at me for a little time, and then he stroked his moustache.

‘He is too young to be trusted,’ he said, ‘with the fate of an empire.’

‘I am a gentleman, and I can be trusted with anything.’

‘Shall we trust the boy?’ said Uhrich.

‘I think I would,’ said Bourbaki.

‘Well, boy, go to the Emperor, and tell him this. If he respects the neutrality of Luxemburg, he is ruined.’

That message was never delivered.

The streets at Briey are very steep, and I saw Uhrich ride down one of the steepest of them towards Strasburg, and I saw him no more. Bourbaki rode down another street, in the direction of Sedan.

I have never seen those men since, but I may be allowed to say that I conceived an affection for both of them which I think will last beyond death.

I stood in the street for a little time, and I smoked. I could see Uhrich on the other hill, and saw that he had got his route in a correct manner. Then I heard a horse's feet behind me, and I turned.

I knew my man at once. I had seen him before. It was the Crown Prince of Saxony.

Those Saxons have manners nearly equal to those of the French or the English aristocracy. The Crown Prince said—

‘I beg a thousand pardons for troubling you, monsieur, but can you tell me where I shall find General Uhrich and General Bourbaki?’

I said that they were both gone away.

‘I regret it,’ said the Crown Prince of Saxony. ‘I must ride far and fast to-night. I must go to Luxemburg.’

It struck me that I would go to. I proposed it to the Crown Prince, and he was very much pleased with the idea. As a staff-officer I had no difficulty with Colonel

Barbot, and so the Crown Prince and I trotted off very comfortably through Audun la Romain, Audun la Tige, to Esch.

CHAPTER IX.

‘A PLEASANT country, M. Schneider,’ said the Crown Prince of Saxony. ‘I am sorry that you ever got it from us.’

‘We should be loth to give it back, sire,’ I said.

‘And yet you want the Prussian Rhine provinces?’

‘*I* do not; they are emphatically German.’

‘And are these provinces so very emphatically French, then?’

‘Speak to the first peasant you meet here, and see if he can speak German.’

‘Not here at Audun la Romain, but twenty miles off, in Alsace and Lorraine. What do you say?’

‘They can certainly speak German there.’

‘And cannot speak French.’

The argument was not prolonged. We were at Audun la Romain, in front of the little auberge, when the deadly news came. I knew nothing of what had happened. No one in France knew much in those times.

A gentleman rode up to the Crown Prince, and put a newspaper into his hand, pointing out a certain paragraph. He read it very carefully, and then uttered an oath. He was turning to ride away, when he seemed to remember that he had not taken leave of me. He turned very swiftly, and bowed, and the paper fell from his pocket. I was bowing to him, and I did not notice it until he had ridden away. Then I saw it, and went and picked it up. I was thinking of riding after him, but he was over the farther hillside. I looked at it. It was the *Indépendance Belge*.

What could be in it? What could have disturbed the Crown Prince, so as nearly to make him forget his manners? Had he been a Prussian, any breach of manners would have been quite accounted for; but a Saxon! you might as well have expected a breach of manners from a Frenchman or a Tyrolese. There was something in the paper, and after all it was a public newspaper, and I looked at it. I was not long in discovering what it was. I stood before the auberge at Audun la Romain, with my bridle on my arm.

I uttered a loud exclamation. The landlord asked me what was the matter.

‘Have you money hoarded here?’ I said.

He looked at me sily, and nodded his head.

‘Move it—hide it—bury it,’ I said.

‘But,’ said he, ‘I am going to buy Père Thomas’s orchard.’

‘Do not,’ I said, ‘you will get it cheaper in two years.’

‘Ho!’ he said, ‘M. le Lieutenant, then it is war.’

‘That is more than I can say, but mind your money.’

‘Hein, hein! but this is a sad disappointment. I have set my eyes on that orchard for ten years; but even if it came to the worst we should seize Trèves and Cologne.’

Of course I could say nothing else. My duty as an officer prevented me. I rode away towards Sedan, hardly knowing what I did.

Had this aubergiste lived twenty or five-and-twenty miles farther from the frontier, he would probably have scorned my advice; as it was, he, as I afterwards found out, took it. When the Saxons came that way he was found to be possessed of an admirable temper, two dozen of wine, eight bottles of atrocious brandy, and nine francs, all of which he formally delivered over to the Maire of Audun when the requisition came,

and got a receipt from the Government of the 4th of September. After the peace, he opened his cellars, bought the orchard, drove a roaring trade with the Germans, who swear by him, and has made rather a good thing of it than otherwise.

What were the words which I read in the *Indépendance Belge*, which made me turn my horse's head towards Sedan, and say—

‘Which of them is mad?’

The words were very few. ‘The Emperor sends an ultimatum, demanding that the King of Prussia should guarantee that the name of the Prince of Hohenzollern should never be mentioned again for the candidature to the crown of Spain.’

It was a declaration of war. I saw it at once. No nation could stand that and exist. It was possibly the most awful act of arrogance since the paper blockade of the British ports by the first Napoleon. For the gentleman who thus committed

political suicide I am extremely sorry. His position was a very difficult one. Now, in his misfortune, I choose to forget everything—his awful perjury, his terrible extravagance, and, lastly, his insensate folly. I choose to forget them ; I can speak no more of them. I held his commission once. I swore to be faithful to the French Empire, and I was as long as it lasted. Then I joined the Government of the 4th of September. Rossel, my poor mad friend, did not, and was shot. There is not a single military officer in France who has not violated his *sacramentum militare*.

I am Orleanist now. France has among her sons a bevy of princes, such as the world has seldom seen. Few can compare with them either for virtue or talent. Suppose she selects one of them. Why, then I must once more change my vows ; but, an Orleanist once on the throne, I change my vow for the last time, and there are many others who would do the same.

I rode to Fond de Givonne to see my father and give him the news. I rang at the bell, and after a time that horrible old witch, Mère Mathilde, opened the door.

‘What do you do here?’ I said.

‘I keep the house.’

‘Where is my father?’

‘At Cologne, and your mother too. Here is a letter for you.’

CHAPTER X.

THE letter from my father said in effect, 'We have your bride. Do your duty by France. If you are killed, you will need no money yourself; I will leave some for your wife. If you live, you are my own good son, and shall share all, on one solitary condition—that you burn this letter at once. You must know that we shall lose Alsace and part of Lorraine for a time, and I do not choose to sacrifice my property; in fact, decline to do so. The Emperor is totally misguided by his wife and by his generals. I have sources of information which you cannot have, and I tell you that we are beaten before a blow has been struck. The Germans do not know it, but I do. The Germans to a man be-

lieve that we shall at least have Cologne. I dare say no more.'

I never knew whence my father got his intelligence; but I had such faith in him that I believed in a very great disaster, yet it was not certain that war was declared. I gave a look at the old garden and at the old house, and then I got on my horse and rode away.

'Ho!' croaked Mère Mathilde after me; 'there are yet two other letters.'

'Why did you not give them, then?'

'Ha! who knows? I think I wanted to plague you. So Marie is not good enough for you, eh?'

I said, 'You are a fool,' and took the letters. They were serious enough. One was from Mark, a very difficult one to make out; but it ran like this:

'Well-beloved, — The Archduke will come through the Eifel. The Prussians do not at this moment know whether the

Southern States will go with them. If they do, we are gone. We are told off at 1200 men, and we shall not fight above 500.

MARK.'

The other letter was from Jacques Cartier :

' Dear, — Mind this. Our chance is against Falkenstein. Tell your General so. The old dog is of the Blucher school, and will commit endless blunders. *Our people know him very well indeed.* Now, in conclusion, try to use your influence to keep our officers out of the cafés. This is a serious and sad business. The others are not ready; but they are getting ready, and they will be three to one on us with an inferior population. Our people say that they will win in a canter, though I can hardly believe that. Son of my heart, I want to tell you this. The English won at Trafalgar against great odds. Why should

not we? I talked to an old English sailor once, and asked how they won. He said, because *they kept on firing after the others had left off*. Keep your men together, and continue the fire, even when hope seems lost. Don't, if you can help it, dash at the Prussians and cross bayonets; it is a great mistake. Stand as the English stand, but do no more. Dashing at an enemy is all nonsense; our men are not physically strong, and are never well trained. *Elan* is our ruin. We go to pieces if we fail; and it is difficult to rally a French regiment.

‘JACQUES CARTIER.’

I wondered very much where Jacques Cartier had got this accession of wisdom. In fact, it was not his at all; it was that of General Robinski, a Pole. Robinski was only a major in the French army; but he was a general in nearly every other, including that of the Confederate States of North America. To write his life would

be to write another story as long as this ; but I may say of him that, though he sold his sword, he was true to two countries above all others—Poland, the land of his birth, and France, the land of his adoption.

Robinski, poor fellow, had a tendency for an idea greater than that of nationality ; he believed in something which he called the ‘ Universal Republic.’ Naturally, he was a great friend of my peculiarly discreet friends, Jacques Cartier and Mark, my brother. Naturally, also, when everything went wrong with us, he joined the Commune. Naturally, also, when he was taken with Rossel, he sent to me to give evidence to his character. I asked Lord Orley, who was in Paris distributing *les dons des Anglais*, why. He said probably because I was the greatest fool he knew. He is a droll, Lord Orley, and I gave him a *coup de poing* in fun. I gave evidence to Robinski’s character, about which I did not happen to know much ; but I said no-

thing about his being a Carbonaro and an Internationalist. Orley did much better for him. Orley stripped his sword-arm, and showed the cuts on it. They were eight; 'they would have been twenty,' said Lord Orley, 'had not the prisoner saved my life at Inkerman.'

Said the President, a Royalist, 'You do injustice to your order, milord, in speaking for a traitor and a Communist.'

'I should be unworthy to belong to that order, M. le Président, if I was capable of deserting a comrade in distress,' said Lord Orley.

There was that curious movement in the room which we French call 'sensation.' For a moment I thought that Robinski was saved. Let me go on, please; it is a very short episode.

There was too much known about the man, it seemed. I knew more than I chose to tell; but others, the detective police, knew more, and told it secretly. The poor

fellow had got Revolution on the brain, and the French are pretty good judges of *that* malady. Under the Commune he had done no more harm than Rossel; but when the court-martial came back they were unanimous.

‘A la mort.’

It was a very wet morning, and very cold. When he was put up at the post, Lord Orley, the priest, and myself went up to him. He had finished his religion; so the priest simply gave him the benediction, and he spoke to me.

‘There is a cross round my neck, Schneider,’ he said; ‘take it off when I am down, and give it to your friend Mark. He was one of us.’

Mark had been under the turf many a long day, but I said nothing.

CHAPTER XI.

THE officer of the firing party ordered us away. He knew the priest, Lord Orley, and myself, and we removed. Robinski never staggered for a moment when the volley came; he fell on the back of his head. We feared while the utter horror of the *coup de grâce* went on with the other two, but our man was killed outright.

The officer of the firing party came up as we were rifling him. Round his neck were two gold chains—one with a cross, one with a locket containing the portrait of a not very handsome woman. The officer said,

‘He loved some one once.’

I turned on the officer, and said, ‘He

loved France always; he never betrayed France.'

'I think so,' said the officer. 'M. Schneider, you are a man of mark, but you know the Carbonari.'

'Well?'

'Was he one?'

'I think so, but I cannot quite say. I got in an indirect manner information from him at one time, which, had it been listened to, might have saved France.'

'We know that by your position,' said the officer. 'Gentlemen, will you come and look at Rossel?'

I did not *go*, but left the whole of the ghastly tragedy.

Lord Orley overtook me as we were going into Versailles, and he said,

'All this seems to me a mistake.'

'It is a necessity,' I said, 'thrust on us by the Revolution of 1789, as your Fenian executions were thrust on you by the Irish Rebellion of 1798.'

‘That is true,’ he said; ‘but we only executed absolute murderers. It seems to me a pity that you should shoot such gallant soldiers as Robinski or Rossel, who would have fought for you.’

‘They would have given their heart’s blood against a foreign enemy,’ I said; ‘but they would always plot against the state. No, you the most gentle of all nations (save the Americans) towards political escapades, should certainly not cast the first stone at us. You found it necessary to give a terrible example; we have found the same thing necessary. You have an amount of loyalty to the throne which we have never had, and yet you capitally punished many. I say nothing whatever of the Indian mutiny and its suppression. It was entirely necessary that suppression, and it was done. What, then, has an Englishman to say to *us*?’

‘Well, I am shut up,’ said Lord Orley, and walked on in silence.

I do not in the least know what he meant by saying that he was 'shut up.' Shut up, as far as I understand English, means incarceration. Now, I will take my oath that that good milord walked with me to St. Cloud, and saw the ruins that very afternoon. He never was shut up at all, that man; he was always free to come and go, as Lloyd Lindsay or Dr. Russell. I conceive, however, that he used the expression in the *secunda intentio*, and meant that I had the best of the argument.

Heh, that *secunda intentio*; the Frère Chrétien who taught us our religion at Metz told us much about that figure as logic. I called it a 'figure,' and was put *en piquet* against the wall for half an hour. There I repented of my sins, by telling the Frère Chrétien that the Roman Catholic religion was formed on the grounds of *secunda intentio*. I got four hours' piquet for saying that, and a frightful scolding

from the President. But I hold my opinion to this day.

This is a catalogue of reminiscences; but it has its purpose. Robinski gave information to Jacques Cartier, Jacques Cartier gave it to my father; and I am rich instead of being poor. I must ask you to forgive me for laying a little *immortelle* on the grave of Robinski and Rossel, for I loved them both, with all their sins.

CHAPTER XII.

I WOULD rather not write the next chapter ; but I must. I wish that Spicheren was blotted out from the face of the earth. They cry out about Sedan, but Sedan was only the end of our ruin ; Spicheren began it.

War was declared, as you know, and the deadly game began. It came on us very suddenly after all, though General Trochu tells me that it came equally suddenly on the Germans, and the German General von Lindenau tells me that they were totally unprepared. We in the army, left without information, believed that it was a war against Prussia alone. But we very soon heard that Saxony, Wurtemberg, Baden, and the other states of the Bund were

against us. We always believed that the oppressed states of the war of 1866 would be for us. But no; that idea of a united Germany was in their hearts, as the idea of a united France is in ours.

We never believed that Bavaria, for instance, would have gone against us. Paris and Munich are the finest homes of art and music north of the Alps. We never dreamt that the people of Pilotz, Kaulbuck, and Wagner would have turned against us; but they did. Their feeling of patriotism was too strong; and *en revanche* for their going against Prussia, the doctrinaires of Berlin made the highly-cultivated people of Dresden and Munich do all the dirty work. I appeal to Saxony and Bavaria if I am not right. And this thing was done by the nation which produced Humboldt and Bunsen. Well, the baseness of St. Sebastian was done by the nation which produced Wilberforce; and once more, the affair of the September massacres was done by the

nation which produced Chateaubriand ; so that it seems to me that it is only pot and kettle after all.

For my part, I was now nominated to the staff of General Florie des Anges (that is not his name, but he must bear it). My business was to ride furiously about with written messages. I should have liked to have known what was in the envelopes, but I never did. The delivery of them produced generally a sudden disaster. I noticed this during the whole campaign. I am anticipating again when I say that General Florie des Anges was extremely *dévo*t, and was supposed to be a relation of the Empress.

Now for a month, or it seems to me twenty years, I was utterly dissociated from wife, father, mother, and everything I had ever loved. I rode about three thousand miles, and no one knew me when I turned up again. At least, I am a little wrong there. I said no one. But then your

wife is no one, you know. She is everybody.

I may fairly say from what I had heard and from what I suspected, that we should get a reverse or two, and should have to raise France against Germany, and beat her into submission (a matter which Gambetta tried too late). But I was not prepared for Spicheren. It took me utterly by surprise: *our men did not stand*.

A great deal has been said about Spicheren. Vogel von Falkenstein was suspended from command at once for doing nearly the finest deed of arms ever done in the world, and most properly. The chances were fifty to one against him. In Prussia, as in England, you shoot or suspend a general officer *pour encourager les autres*. I can quite understand the extreme anger of Von Moltke and his school against Vogel von Falkenstein; yet he won. Why? Because the old mastiff knew that the regiments before him would not stand.

I did not know that. When I saw the steel blue battalions coming up at us, I thought that the man was mad. They wound in and out among the vineyard walls, and we fired at them (I was a mere spectator, you must remember). Our men fired very well, and with great accuracy, but still this horrible blue snake came winding on. We scotched it in places, but it was never killed.

The rise of Spicheren is as steep as the roof of a house, and you could see the men coming on. On level ground, you know, you can only see the front rank of an opposing battalion. At Spicheren you could see thousand after thousand preparing for the assault should the first assault fail. I thank Heaven I was not frightened; but, then, young married men seldom are.

They fired very well. Their artillery did not support them so well as in the later battles. I found myself with the back of my head against a wall, and somebody said

that Lieutenant Schneider's horse had been shot under him. Like David Copperfield, on a different occasion, I was prepared to deny the fact indignantly; but seeing that the horse *was* dead, and that I was bleeding all down my back, I began to believe that there was something in it.

The next minute our inexorable enemies were over the wall. Dazed and stunned as I was, I tried to do something. We had regiments who would have disputed every inch of ground, but these poor boys could not and would not stand. Do not laugh at them or despise them in any way. You English stand to the death better than any troops in the world. Yet do not even you speak of Chillianwallah to a certain dragoon regiment of yours.

CHAPTER XIII.

I WISH to speak the truth, and I think I do so when I say that after Spicheren our men began to get frightened, and to distrust their officers. Of the other three lost battles the men knew nothing, until a pestilent rogue came in from Luxemburg with copies of the *Indépendance Belge*.

Of all the lunacies committed under the sun, the lunacy of the Emperor was the greatest. Fancy reading this: 'Macmahon has lost a battle, *but there is no reason why matters should not recover themselves.*' From that moment we were utterly lost. He had almost better have lied, and claimed a victory.

We, like yourselves, have been so accustomed to victory, that we do not behave

well under defeat. When your Wellington bore down on us from the lines of Torres Vedras, with the command of the sea at his back, we did not behave well. Napoleon the Great was elsewhere, and Wellington counted him for 30,000 men. We were always in doubt after the first four great battles; we began looking to the rear, and that is fatal in soldiering. I do not think that there was a coward among us, only we distrusted 'head-quarters.'

Forbach was the worst of all, but that I never saw. A staff-officer with whom I was lying told me that he had been there, and that the battle showed that our men would not stand against the Germans. I laughed at him. He told me to laugh, turned over on his side, and went to sleep.

I remember nothing save episodes during the weary days which followed before the frightful day of St. Privat. I was riding now continually. I could make out

nothing at all. I was a mere messenger. I had to put letters in my havresack, and carry them across country. Sometimes I had something to eat, sometimes I had nothing at all. My horse, which carried me long and well, was an English bay horse. I tried to find where they had buried him the other day, but I could not.

It is not so very safe, this carrying of despatches, I can tell you. You lose your way sometimes in the dark, and, if you are close to the frontier, you may violate neutrality. Now I was close on the Dutch frontier, and I completely lost my way in the dark one night ; that was before the passage of the Archduke by Metz you will notice, or, to be more correct, it was the evening before the day on which Bazaine was doomed.

It grew very dark, and there was no moon ; my orders were for Longwy, and there were two blazing villages in a line which guided me past Metz. Then I got

into a dark wood, and lost sight of them and of everything; then I got on a broad blank down, and when I got to the summit of it I found that I had entirely lost my way.

There was a cluster of lights a long way off, which I made out to be Thionville. It could surely be no other place. The silence of death was all round me, and it was difficult to believe that a great battle had been fought and lost within sight of where I stood that day.*

The field of battle was above twenty miles away, and yet I felt that the gentle wind which was waving the long grass on the down, was also waving the dead men's hair who lay down yonder behind the lights of Thionville.† I do not think that I ever felt so sad and lonely in my whole life.

* The author is only correctly putting down personal recollections.

† From this down you can see the cathedral at Metz, twenty miles away. I forget the name of it.

There was a little solitary pool of water on it, and I dismounted from my horse and watered him. Then I let the poor beast graze, and then I sat down and thought.

What was there to think about? only disaster after disaster. The Archduke might turn Metz, and the peasants had told me that the whole nation of Germany were on the march through Saarbruck and Colmar. Now I thought of our attenuated battalions, and I am afraid that I lay with my face on the short, dewless grass, and made a fool of myself.

I roused myself, and thought, 'Where was I?' I had eaten nothing since six in the morning, and my poor horse was failing. I mounted him again, and went down from the summit rather faint, but knowing, if you will look at the map, that I should be at Longwy long before the boldest Uhlan.

The down dipped steeply, and then I was on a country road. Then I suddenly

found a stream before me, and a village beyond.

I was in great doubt. The village was in high festival, and I remembered that it was a great day among the Catholics, though I, as a Huguenot, could not for the life of me remember which. I was well in the shade, and I reconnoitred.

I saw a young man come out with a young woman under the eaves of a shed opposite. I knew what I was witnessing, for I had done the same thing myself before. He was asking her to have him, I knew that. She gave him one kiss, and went back to her mother. I was glad of this, and I was also glad that she told him not to come in again for a quarter of an hour, because I wanted this young man most particularly. He stood under the shed, there was no one near, and I said,

‘Pst, pst.’

‘Qui vive?’ he whispered.

‘Is it France?’ I asked.

‘No, not here. Come over the stream, and you will find where you are.’

He came at once, and looked at me.

‘A French officer,’ he said. ‘My dear, if you come over the stream, you break the neutrality of Luxemburg.’

‘I must have wandered,’ I said.

‘Yet come over. We are all mad for your side here.’

‘I cannot. I must go south to skirt the frontier.’

‘Where do you wish to go?’ said the young man.

‘To Longwy as fast as possible.’

‘Then see, dear officer, I can take you across Luxemburg by daylight. No one will be a bit the wiser in any way.’

I hesitated. It was a fearfully immoral proceeding. I do not defend myself at all. Cast me out of the city, and stone me. But when he told me the name of the village, I saw that it was utterly hopeless to get to Longwy in time. I saw that I must

do it. I crossed the stream with him, and stood in the territory of the King of Holland.

‘Stay here under the shed,’ said the young man. ‘Were you watching me and my darling?’

‘Yes; but it does not matter. I am a young married man myself.’

‘See, then, how it happens. She is going to have me. She is a French girl, and I would die for her or for France. It will be exactly ten minutes before I get my horse. It is only half-past ten now; I will go to her for one moment, then I will be with you.’

I stood for less than five minutes before I heard the sound of two pretty little feet which stopped near me. A gentle little voice said,

‘Where is the French officer?’

I said,

‘Here!’

Then two pretty little hands were clasped

in mine. I knew they were pretty, though I never saw them. It was too dark. Then a little arm went round my neck, and I got a kiss on both cheeks. With the cleverness of my nation, I guessed that this was the young lady who was just engaged to my guide, and, with the tact of my nation, I did not return them, saying only,

‘I will pay those back to my wife.’

My guide Max came round the corner, leading his horse.

‘I have been kissing the officer,’ said the young woman.

‘You had better kiss me,’ said Max good-humouredly, ‘I am handsomer than he is.’

‘Pas du tout,’ I said; ‘though we have never seen one another, I will match myself for beauty against you, and I am not handsome.’

‘Max is *very* handsome,’ said the young lady, and from sounds which I heard, I should think that he got a great deal more

kissing than I did. 'Save France, officer,' said the young woman.

'I will die for her if I can, mademoiselle,' I said. 'She must save herself from herself.'

CHAPTER XIV.

THE cabarets were open in that village. The people were sitting in the street looking at the weather; at M. le Curé; at Sister Agatha, who had come out to air herself after attending a man with a broken leg; at M. le Maire, and Madame his wife, and everything which was to be seen. Yet it is a most remarkable thing that not one of these gentle Luxemburgers SAW ME. If I caught an eye, there was naught but speculation in it.

I think that a French staff-officer, with a gold-hilted sword, red breeches, a white cloak lined with scarlet, and patent leather boots to his knees, is rather an impressive person. But they did not see me at all. There are none so blind as those who will

not see. I saluted M. le Maire; he looked me full in the face, and cut me dead. I understood the joke when an anonymous hand sent me the *Luxemburg Chronicle*. The Maire of this village was called to account for letting me pass. His answer was very good:

‘I can only say that several people were there in uniform. Ostensibly, Herr Dukeldorf, of the Grand Duke’s army. I amused myself by watching the people swinging. I noticed very late at night a man in scarlet and white, whom I took to be an Englishman. Lord Granville having guaranteed our neutrality, I thought it indecorous to demand passports of an English officer, at a time when we were *en fête*.’

The answer passed, as I heard afterwards. Meanwhile I went on with my guide into the darkness. He was most terribly French, this young fellow, and his curses against the Prussians were loud and deep. I reasoned with him.

‘You continually abuse the Prussians. Why so?’

‘They are disagreeable blackguards.’

‘They are better educated than we are; their domestic morals are excellent. We declared war, and they wanted to cripple us. Why are we to abuse them at all?’

‘Did you know them at Luxemburg?’

‘Many hearts were sore when they left it,’ I said.

‘That is true,’ he answered, ‘yet they are most disagreeable. They have violated the sacred soil of France.’

‘No soil is sacred,’ I answered, ‘if it cannot be defended. I dislike the Prussians; their habits are by no means like our own, in some respects they are better. But you must remember that all the southern states have joined with them.’

‘Yes,’ said the Luxemburger, ‘the whole horde of barbarians is on France at once.’

‘Are the people of Munich and Dresden barbarians?’ I asked. ‘Are the gentle Bavarian-Tyrolese barbarians?’

He was silent, and came to the woman’s argument, ‘I hate them all alike.’

Then we had very quiet talk under the winking stars—very pleasant talk, which made me think of Marie, and his being as silly about his lover as I was about mine. We rode very fast, and at one o’clock in the morning we came to a large village, which seemed to me to consist of very vast buildings, with a continual noise of water. He trotted up before me through a beautiful garden, and I had no difficulty in seeing that I was in front of a splendid hotel, and that there were two other splendid hotels right and left of us. Still all was dark and silent.

‘What place is this?’ I asked.

‘The Baths of Mondorf,’ he answered. ‘Keep out of the light when they open the door. Why, in the name of goodness, do

you French dress like that?' and he rang the bell.

I whispered to him, 'This is the extreme south point of your Dutch territory, I think.'

'It is so. Ride into the shade, dear officer, and turn that white cloak of yours inside out. Unless I am mistaken, we are in extreme danger. Do you see that light on the hill close by?'

'Yes.'

'What do you make of it?'

'A watch fire.'

'Yes, and I fear German. Turn your cloak, and keep in the shade. If everything is wrong here, leave me to shift for myself. Strike straight up the village, take the first turning to the right, get among the lanes, and keep asking the way to Petange. Not a villager will betray you.'

My chances of being shot for a spy seemed to me extremely prosperous. The only question was, how far had the Germans pushed?

My friend rang again. Now the door was thrown open on the darkness, and a voice said, 'Who goes there, monsieur?'

Then there was a whispering, and my guide went in. Then he came out, and said, 'It is all as it should be; we must rest here an hour. That fire on the hill is from burning weeds; there is no German within fifteen miles. We *must* rest, for we shall have to ride far and fast, and our horses will not stand it without rest.'

'We are fearfully near the frontier,' I said.

'The frontier is on the other side of the garden,' he said.

I felt the necessity of rest. I passed in through a darkened hall into a brilliantly-lighted saloon, though no light had been visible from the outside, and to my unutterable astonishment I found four gentlemen playing at cards, and a beautiful young lady advising the youngest gentleman how to play.

The host, who had admitted me into this

saloon was a tall, gray-headed man. He said in the most apologetic manner, 'Messieurs les Anglais, will you allow a captain of the Duke of Luxemburg's guard to have his supper here?'

They rose and bowed. I saw by their eyes that they knew everything, but they never said a word which could compromise me. A very tall man, with a carefully-curved moustache, came forward and begged me to be seated. A shorter, stout-built man, with a brown beard and a bright eye, took the opportunity to sweep all the money and all the counters off the table, and put them into his own pocket. There was about four francs, as I guessed, and the thing was so openly and audaciously done that I could not help laughing. The tall man with the moustache saw from my laughing that something was wrong, turned at once, missed the money, and at once began a personal encounter on the youngest of the party, the man who had not taken it.

They were in no way heated with wine these two, but they pulled one another about, until the younger one slipped on the polished floor, and came down on the back of his head. Then an older gentleman (he was not much over thirty, evidently the brother of the younger combatant) picked his brother up; and then there was a general objurgation, which ended in the restoration of the four francs by the short, stout-built gentleman with the brown beard.

I thought, of course, that there would be at least two duels over the matter. I never saw men handle one another like that before. I only hoped that they would not ask me to interfere, and be a second to either of them. The youngest among them begged my pardon for *tapage* in most excellent French. Then I found that they were going to supper. They did not look like lunatics at all, though they behaved, as I should say, most disgracefully.

I took the opportunity to step out and ask the landlord who they were. He said, 'O! they are only correspondents of the London press. The one with the brown beard is trying to get through the German lines into Metz. Here are their names in the visitors' book. They must start in two hours from now, they say.'

I looked at the visitors' book, and then I looked at the landlord. I knew the names of three of these men very well indeed, for I had read much English lately; the fourth, the younger of the two brothers, I did not know, but as he had signed himself with V.C. after his name, I took occasion, before supper, to ask the tall man with the moustache, the correspondent of the ——, who he was.

'He is the hero of Rajpootpoor, in the Mutiny. He was only seventeen then. He and his brother have come out, I suspect, officially; but I don't know, and I don't ask. I ask nothing which I do not want to know.'

I don't ask whether or no you are a French officer carrying despatches.'

'Please do not.'

'Of course I will not; but if you happened to meet such a person advise him to read his despatches, to burn them, and then to remember them; but before all things to get to Longwy.'

'How far have the Germans got?' I asked suddenly.

'I *can't* know. I shall know to-morrow afternoon, but that would be too late for you. Do you know a place called Petange?'

'I should, my brother was killed there.'

'Was there ever a battle there?'

'No; he was killed by wolves in the snow years ago. I shall keep to the right of Mont St. Jean, and drop on to Longwy comfortably.'

'Are you afraid of the Luxemburgers? I think they are getting frightened.'

'I shall keep to the country lanes.'

‘Now come to supper, and after supper no bed, then a start,’ said the Englishman.

My Luxemburger had his supper in the kitchen, declining to join us for political reasons. We had a most excellent company. I desire no better company than that of educated Englishmen. I was in hopes that they would become boisterous again, but they, as they explained to me, were on the war trail, and took but little wine, only comparing maps. At half-past two my good young guide came for me. They also ordered out their horses. I parted from the kindly, gentle English War Correspondents, but not from their writings.

CHAPTER XV.

I THOUGHT very much of my fantastic companions, as I and my guide rode away through the sleeping villages. No one noticed us there at all, and, oddly enough, when morning dawned, no one noticed us either. The Luxemburgers refused to see us in any way at all. Their uniform is of the most modest sort, many of your English volunteer regiments are gayer. Yet for me, with a white cloak lined with scarlet, a blue tunic, red trousers, and a gold-hilted sword, they had no eyes whatever.

We carefully skirted the frontier, keeping on the right side of N—. It was a most remarkable thing that the *douaniers* were quite as blind as the peasants. I saw them go into their barracks whenever we

approached. At the very last, near Petange, I caught an officer who was coming round the corner. He at once addressed me in English. He said :

‘English officers should scarcely travel in uniform, sir.’

‘It is extremely bad manners,’ I replied. ‘I will not transgress again.’

‘You will get us into serious trouble if you do,’ he said, and passed on.

‘Longwy is close now,’ remarked my guide.

‘Yes,’ I answered; ‘we will go this way, through the wood, and drop down on it nicely.’

‘Then you know this country?’

‘Now I do. Do you know that my brother was killed here fifteen years ago by a wolf?’

‘There was only one boy killed like that in the time of the Crimean war. What did you say your name was?’

‘Valentin Schneider.’

‘Great heaven,’ he said, ‘then you are the wehr wolf!’

We were deep in the wood above Longwy as he said this, and I answered, or rather began to answer, ‘That ridiculous story—’ when he pointed with his whip, and said:

‘Look there!’

There was a very large wolf in the forest path before us, with the blazing morning sun shining down on his coat. I bethought me of something. I thought that influence was influence, and might be useful. I threw my rein to my guide, and jumped off my horse, leaving him in terror.

I ran up to the wolf and called him to me. Then I stroked his head, and kissed his face. Then I ordered him away into the dense copse-wood, and he went.

Now you are puzzled. Well, I will deceive you no longer. It was no more a wolf than your sister’s Skye terrier is a wolf. It was a large sheep-dog used to

children, as all sheep-dogs are, and I had just ordered him back to his master.

My guide looked on me with deep awe.

‘Then it *is* true about you?’ he said.

‘Many things are true and many untrue in this world,’ I said sententiously.

‘Yes. But I can believe all things now. Your brother was killed here by a wolf in the snow?’

‘Yes,’ I said.

He turned to me and made a certain sign. I saw that he was a Carbonaro; but I looked him steadily in the eyes, and would give no reply.

I said directly,

‘Ha, here are the chimneys of lower Longwy below us; now we had better part, kind friend. You must accept these four napoleons from me.’

He hesitated.

‘It is too much,’ he said.

‘SHE will like something pretty,’ I said.

‘*Bon!*’ he answered; ‘you would per-

suade Satan to be good with that French tongue of yours. See, I will give you something for your money.'

'And what is that?' I said, hoping for intelligence about the movements of troops.

He pulled up his horse and said:

'Is there any man whom you love better than another in this world? I do not mean woman, for I know all.'

I said:

'Yes, my father.'

'Every man except a dog loves his father,' he replied; 'I mean a young man.'

'Yes, I love one young man nearly as well as my wife.'

'And his name?'

'Mark.'

'I know that. I have seen you together when you did not think it. Mark is your own brother.'

I saw it all in a dense mist. I remembered something in Mark's eyes for which I could not account. But I was emphatic-

ally determined to have the whole matter out.

‘Man,’ I said, ‘how can you prove this?’

‘Does not your own heart prove it? Do you not know your remarkable likeness to him? If you want proofs, go to Mère Mathilde.’

‘But he was killed.’

‘He was *not*; he was stolen by Mère Mathilde, to annoy your father. The Carbonari all know *that*.’

‘Why?’

‘I cannot tell; your father did her some injury, and she revenged it in that way.’

‘You will drive me mad. What relation was Marie, my wife, to Mère Mathilde?’

‘None whatever.’

‘Thank heaven,’ I said; for a horrible doubt had crept into my mind.

‘She was no relation to any one,’ he said. ‘Had she been, a hundred of us would have told you. Now, good-bye.’

And so he turned and left me. Mark my own brother! Does Nature ever err? When he twined his pretty feet with mine, they seemed to me like no other feet. I could see it all as plainly as possible now.

Bang! and a boom through the forest. The morning gun from Longwy; the dreams of the night were over.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE drawbridge was down, and I rode clattering in. Head-quarters were already astir, and leaving my horse I went upstairs.

The Commandant and a certain great French General were sitting together over coffee and business. They received me very courteously. If the General had known the company I had been in the quarter of an hour previously, as a strong Napoleonist he might not have been quite so well satisfied.

I put my despatches before the Commandant; he, as a matter of etiquette, handed them to the General, who read them.

While he did so, I watched the shrewd, beautiful old face, bronzed with Algerian, Crimean, and Italian suns. When he had

finished them he handed them to the Commandant, who said,

‘He must be nearly past us, General.’

‘I do not think it,’ said the General. ‘I cannot believe it. These despatches are dated last night, sir. You must have ridden fast.’

‘By which route could you have come?’ said the Commandant of Longwy.

‘Pst! Pst! don’t ask questions,’ said the General.

‘I have ridden all night,’ I replied, ‘save an hour which I spent while I baited my horse with some English lunatics at—’

‘Don’t tell more than you are asked,’ said the General. ‘You have behaved splendidly. You shall hear of this some day, my child. Old moustache,’ to the Commandant, ‘did you ever do better than this?’

‘Not I. This baby-faced boy is like one of those boys which the English breed. You remember the boy Arbuthnot, the

young ensign, who fell with the flag over him at the Alma?

I was a little nettled at his quoting an English boy. I said, 'And you also doubtless remember the French boy Casabianca, who was blown up in the Orient because he would not leave his post. And I beg to add, gentlemen, that I am not a boy, but a married man.'

They were both startled, and asked me to sit down.

They whispered together for some time, and then the General said,

'Sir, I did not notice your name. You are the younger M. Schneider of Sedan?'

'Yes.'

'You are aware that your father has deserted France?'

'He was a German. I am a Frenchman. He will do nothing against France. He has removed his property. He has done nothing at all else.'

'Good; but you are utterly for France?'

‘Should I have violated every law of national honour for her, as I did last night,’ I answered, ‘if I was not prepared to die for her?’

‘Your bride is in Germany?’ said the General.

‘She is,’ I said; ‘and I shall never see her until the secret of the French army has been told to the world—I mean if I am not killed.’

‘What is the secret of the French army, M. Schneider?’

‘Attenuated battalions. The same secret exists with regard to the English army, but that is of no consequence.’

He rang a bell. ‘See to M. Schneider’s horse,’ he said. ‘You are going on a very long and dangerous journey, M. Schneider.’

I bowed.

‘I do not think that there is much chance of your succeeding, M. Schneider. You will either be killed or taken prisoner.’

I bowed again.

‘The Germans are pressing us very closely, and we do not know what may happen. You have shown fine powers of riding swiftly, and you must use them. Will you look at this map?’

I did so. He put down his hand on a place called Ste. Marie aux Chenes, and he said, ‘You must be there in twenty-four hours.’

It did not seem to me at all impossible. I said it would be easy.

‘Not so easy as you think,’ he said. ‘Did you ever hear of Uhlans?’

I said, ‘Yes, but really know very little about them.’ I thought that they were something of the nature of Cossacks or Pandours, Mahrattas or Mamelukes. I had no idea that they were men selected from every cavalry regiment in Germany, two by two. I will say more of them afterwards.’

‘The Uhlans are thirty miles in front of the main line of the Germans. You must mind them.’

‘I am afraid of no German.’

‘But you might be afraid of two,’ said the dry old General. ‘You have to carry despatches.’

‘Give them to me, sir, and I will start at once.’

‘On the contrary, you will breakfast with me and M. le Commandant; you will then go to bed, sleep for four hours, and then you will ride.’

There was a very good breakfast. I ate ravenously till I was satisfied, then I proposed to lie upon the sofa. But the wise old Algerian made me take my clothes off and get into his bed. He even insisted on my changing my shirt. When I dropped to sleep I saw him putting the windows open and arranging my clothes.

Then I went into Fairyland. Marie and I and my father and mother were gathering lilies in a most beautiful garden, and Jacques Cartier came, and we gave him some of our lilies. And Mère Mathilde

came with a wolf beside her, and she said to my father, 'Come and look at your work.' And we all went and looked; and Mark was lying stark and bloody, with his white gaiters turned up to the sky; and I thought that Marie would have cried, but she did not. She touched my eyes, and then I saw a beautiful angel looking in Mark's face with curiosity and pity, and the angel turned to Marie and to me, and I called to it by name, for it was Mark himself; and then the angel spread its wings and flew away, leaving only Mark's corpse upon the ground. I burst from Marie, and made a wild effort to get at the angel to say good-bye, and I felt a strong arm round my chest, and heard a voice say,

'Steady; you have been dreaming.'

It was the Commandant of Longwy.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE General was also sitting on the bed. He said, 'You must keep all your wits about you, my boy.'

'What time is it?' I asked.

'Half-past one. We have been discussing together, and we have come to a certain determination. We will give you no written despatches. I will give you my authority to the Emperor, and that will carry you anywhere; but you must tell the words which I tell you to no one but a general. Here are your clothes; dress yourself. We have got you a good horse. Put on your cloak with the red side outwards, and God speed you. You *must* be at Ste. Marie aux Chenes by morning.'

I was on horseback in ten minutes, as

fresh as possible. They gave me two glasses of claret, and then the General led me down the street, where no one could hear, as he told me my despatch in a few words.

‘Tell the Emperor to avoid *Sedan*. The whole thing is concerted, and I know it; move every man to the right, and make for Paris. Tell him not to stand till you come to Chalons, and then only for a short time.’

I learnt this by heart, and then I sped away through the glorious summer weather over the plains of Lorraine.

The message was never delivered to any one who would have listened to it. In my opinion it would not have made very much difference if it had been. It would most emphatically have saved the surrender at Sedan, but it would not have saved us elsewhere.

Heaven defend any nation from Vauban’s fortifications. A strong place without large star forts outside is a mere mouse-trap. Take Luxemburg, for instance, ‘the

strongest place in the world.' Why any fool could take Luxemburg in three or four days. The Prussians knew that very well, and not being ready for war in that year, dropped it, as the Irish say, like a red-hot potato. *They* were not going to have an army corps, or possibly three, hemmed in that valley. When they left Luxemburg they were just preparing to put a series of star forts round it, at a mile's radius from the glacis! With modern artillery and engineering, a man who could not take Luxemburg as it stands, has no earthly right to draw his pay.

If you think that this is *incroyable*, just look at the case of Sedan. Nay, look at every one of Vauban's fortresses; and I hear your French and English officers saying that taking a fortress is only 'a matter of time.' Certainly, with regard to one of Vauban's fortresses, with modern ideas pitted against it. But give the Germans Luxemburg or Belfort for a year, and the

world will not get it from them. They are, I see, doing the matter of outlying forts at Strasburg and Metz, so those towns are hopelessly gone.

Honour where honour is due. That funny little civilian, M. Thiers (whom I do not admire), was the first man in France to see this. He, as nearly as possible, saved Paris by his genius. Let us hope that he may save France.

CHAPTER XVIII.

You can put your horse at a gallop over those lovely cultivated downs in Lorraine and Champagne, and ride as straight as an eagle flies. We know that to our ruin. The subdivision of land has made every inch of ground valuable, and so we have no hedges at all. I should like to see a German army advancing through the county of Kent, just for curiosity's sake, before the volunteers of three counties. I am under the impression that I would back the volunteers if they were properly handled.

Give them proper organisation and proper recognition, and they would play very heavy mischief with an invading army until your regular army was ready (which it seldom is). As for your regular army, they

were made to conquer, and they always have conquered. You English have scarcely a disaster to show out of America. I can only remember two, both in Holland.

I had a fancy that the air of Champagne made the wine, for as I rode (by the compass) the air was blowing from the pearly blue hills of Champagne, far to the right, and I felt as though I had drank a bottle of Moet or Veuve Cliquot. My horse was a splendid beast, French bred, for he had the blood of his sire Monarque in his veins, and his granddam was Blink Bonny. He had been crossed into the grand Norman blood, and was heavier than a racehorse, but had possibly more terrible powers of endurance.

I think that in your Life Guards the horses are a little too small for the men, though they are unsurpassed as cavalry horses. It is not that the horses are too small, but the men are too large.

This horse of mine, Rataplan, could

carry me as a racehorse carries a jockey. I was only ten stone as I rode, your Life Guards ride fifteen; and Rataplan (to use your calculation) stood nearly eighteen hands. I should have ridden straight through the Chasseurs d'Afrique, with their pretty, weedy little Arabs.

I rode very hard, and towards evening I came to a little solitary farm, a rare thing in those parts, where the farmers live in the large villages; and so, in case of an invasion, put, to speak in a military sense, all their eggs in one basket. There was a very pretty maiden watering the cows, and as I am very fond of all maidens, pretty or otherwise (as I hope you are), I determined to alight here and get my horse fed.

She was very glad to see a French uniform. It was the first she had seen for twelve hours.

This seemed very ominous.

'You see,' she said, as I was taking the

saddle off, 'that the good Emperor is tempting these dogs of Prussians on in order to destroy them; so I suppose that we shall have them here.'

'Are you afraid of them?'

'I! Not I. I was in Trèves for a year, and was always among them. They are barbarians, and talk a savage language which I never could learn; but they are kind dogs enough. The people at St. Privat and Ste. Marie are afraid of them. Not I. Possibly one of them may try to give me a beery kiss, in which case I should slap his face, just as I should yours if you offered to do it, and we should part friends.'

I said, 'I should accept that challenge if I were not married.'

'It is impossible; yet I think it must be true, young as monsieur looks, or he would have given me reason to smack his face.'

We both laughed. She was such a very pretty, plucky girl, that I felt anxious

about her. When we were in the stable together feeding my horse, I urged her to fly.

She said,

‘No. My grandmother and I keep this farm, the men have gone away, and I got my grandmother away this morning.’

‘Do you mean to say that you are going to remain alone here?’ I said, aghast.

‘Most certainly,’ she said. ‘Am I not a Frenchwoman? And you mistake the Germans. They will not hurt me, I know, the sentimental fools.’

‘They are plundering in every direction,’ I said.

‘That is very likely,’ she replied coolly. ‘I have heard of the French, nay, even of the saintly English, doing the same thing. If they plunder me they will not get very rich; for if they can find my grandmother’s gold (of which there is a good deal), it is more than I can. I know that she has hidden it in the house, but where, I have

not the least idea. Come in and eat while your horse is eating.'

She gave me cheese and wine. While I was eating, I said,

'Did your grandmother desert you?'

'No; she is a very clever old woman. She, as an old Alsatian, knew the Germans, and knew that I was a better guard for the house than twenty hot-headed men. If our two men had stayed (which they did not) we should have had a fracas, and might have had the house burnt down. My grandmother would not tell me where the gold was, lest some riotous men of our own nation should force me to tell. Eat fast, the Uhlans cannot be far off. Pierre Leroy saw them ten miles off at one o'clock. I will go and saddle your horse for you.'

'Mais, mademoiselle?'

'Yes. Be tranquil. You must rest. Where are you going?'

'To Ste. Marie aux Chenes.'

'You must ride hard. If you have

despatches, read them and burn them here and now.'

'I carry no despatches on paper, I have them in my head.'

'*Bon.* Look out at the door, and let me serve France by saddling your horse.'

'I cannot bear it.'

'Please let me serve France, monsieur,' she said.

How could I help it? She would do it, and Bayard himself could not have resisted her. She brought my horse round, and then she made me hold him while she rolled up my cloak with the red side outwards.

She then put it over my right shoulder and under my left arm, then she tied the ends with a piece of string under my left arm. I saw that my left arm and my right arm were quite free, and that the thick rolled cloak covered my heart.

'I learnt that at Trèves,' she said, laughing. 'By heavens! here they are.'

Take this kiss to madame your wife, and go for the sake of her.'

I kissed her, but I would not leave her until she urged me in such a way that I could not refuse. Then I left her.

There were those two black specks on the hill before us, which I knew well to be the terrible Uhlans. I rode straight towards them, and when I was within pistol-shot of them I waved a white handkerchief. They both trotted towards me at once. I wheeled and covered them with my Deane and Adams' revolver, knowing perfectly well that I could bring down both their horses. I cried out, 'Ein, Ein!'

One fellow, a very nice young fellow indeed, came forward towards me. I talked to him in German. I told him that our pickets were close by (as indeed they were, though I did not know it), but that I was very anxious about the farm in the valley below, as it was held by a solitary young

lady. I hoped that they would respect her splendid courage.

The young man said frankly that they did not make war against women, and that I might be well assured.

I nodded to him and sped away.

But I must tell you the end of this episode. Affairs had not heated themselves at that time, and there was much chivalry among outposts. As for German chivalry towards women, I think that has never been disputed. But among the soldiers there was but little anger at this time.

As I heard afterwards, within an hour after I rode away towards Ste. Marie aux Chenes, two squadrons of cavalry rode up to and surrounded this young French girl's farm. The officer in command drew up bareheaded in the entrance to the farmyard, and called on the owner to come out.

The pretty solitary girl came out and confronted him.

'I am all alone, monsieur,' she said.

‘ So we have been given to understand,’ said the German. ‘ In consequence of the necessity of war we must spend the night here.’

‘ All is yours.’

‘ Mademoiselle exaggerates with the politeness of her nation. Nothing is ours. Will mademoiselle point out to us the apartments which she desires to keep? If there is a battle I cannot insure mademoiselle; until that happens I can. If any of my soldiers offer any rudeness to you, will you please mention it to *me*?’

There were three hundred and twenty men quartered in her house that night, and not one would stay covered as she passed in and out. All the chivalry of their nature was aroused by her fearless courage and trust in the German respect for women and children. They hurrahed to her as they went away, and the officer, who stayed last and had calculated the cost, offered her the money for the things which they had

bought of her. She burst into tears, and said, as she handed it back to him :

‘ Pour les pauvres prisonniers, monsieur.
Pour les pauvres prisonniers de la France.’

The house was held sacred after that. No battle was fought there : but it passed from battalion to battalion of the Germans. That one heroic girl had stayed behind in the farm when all the men had fled. She was a heroine among the Germans.

Strong feeling was manifested against her by the French. She was accused of being a German spy, and of more things than I dare write. A Bavarian sergeant, it is said, won her heart while he was lying wounded at Briey. I know not how true that may be, but her end was very sad. She had to go to a violently French village not far from the Belgian frontier, on business for her grandmother. She was known there, and was insulted by several young men. She had to go out to a house outside the village after dark, but she never

reached it. She was brutally murdered, it is supposed, from all that can be gathered, by a mob of revolutionists, for a German spy, and the end is too painful to tell.

CHAPTER XIX.

WHEN General Ducrot gave me a certain order I was filled with pleasure. The order was a very simple one. 'You will carry these despatches to the Emperor, sir, and say that we await his orders.' I did so at once, and it seemed to me that the Emperor had no orders to give.

He was sitting in my father's garden under the vine. It seemed so very strange to see him there. It is possible, however, that I am writing too fast, and shall have to go back a little, as your good Thackeray did; he, you remember, in *Pendennis*, writes his first scene and then goes back for eighteen or twenty years to explain it. Well, I am not Thackeray or Dumas, I have only taken the liberty of ten minutes.

When I arrived at my father's door on the thirty-first of August, I found that our house was honoured by many guests whom we would have dispensed with. Heaven defend us from the Prussians, with their dirty boots and their tobacco; but heaven also defend us from French staff officers, who are just as bad. My mother's drawing-room was filled with them, and when I went upstairs I found a young officer lying on Marie's bed, on *my* bed, smoking. How near that young officer was to getting his nose pulled and his ears boxed, I decline to say. I knew that the Saxons were straight in front of us, and that the Bavarians were turning our left. My solitary hope was in Vinoy on our right.

There has been more lying about that battle than about any battle ever fought, and that is saying a great deal. Even the Germans, who generally speak the truth when they win, do not speak the truth about Sedan. However, I roused the young

French officer from Marie's bed, and made him take me to the Emperor.

He was sitting under our vine smoking. He was extremely courteous, and motioned me to one of my own father's chairs. He had little idea that I was a very violent Orleanist, but it would have made no difference to him. My opinion is now, as it always has been, that the man was a gigantic gambler like his uncle, and that he began to see that the game was played out.

He took my despatches and put them aside, all save one. That one he read very attentively. I knew that it was from an eminent lady, and I heard him say,

‘Women are more often wrong than right.’

‘M. Schneider,’ he said to me after a pause, ‘this is your house, I believe?’

‘It is my father's, your Majesty.’

‘Present my compliments to him, if you please, and apologise for the liberties I have taken with it.’

‘My father will be proud, sire. For myself I am an Orleanist, and serve only France.’

‘Well,’ said he, ‘they are the only hope for a regenerated France. Where are the Bavarians?’

‘They are closing on our left, sire.’

‘Ah, that is a bad business. These Prussians make the smaller states do all the fighting.’

‘Sire,’ I said, ‘will you not save yourself? I know Sedan; I was born here and brought up here. I can take you by a hundred ways out of this place. Sire, let me save you, for to-morrow’s field is lost.’

I never shall forget the awful look of affectionate pity which I got. ‘Boy,’ he said, ‘would your friend D’Aumale do such a thing?’

I was obliged to say ‘No.’

‘Then do you think that a Buonaparte dare do what a Bourbon dare not? No, I

dare not leave a legacy of infamy to my son.'

I respected the man from that moment. Nothing will ever make me get over the 2d of December. But—

The man had ruined France, and he began to see how he had been deceived. He saw that he was a ruined gambler, and he tried hard to die.

He is too personally brave for actual suicide. Suicide is the act of a coward. The Emperor, with all his faults, is a Frenchman, and therefore no coward.

He put his hand on my shoulder, and said,

'Boy, you are married, I think?'

'Yes, sire.'

'See if this ring will fit your wife's finger. I shall not have much to give soon; I have saved nothing.'

As the last remark is an actual fact, it is as well to write it down.

The Emperor has come out of it all

with very clean hands. All we true Orleanists allow that.

I left the Emperor and went to get some supper. I got sausage and wine. There had been a heavy business at La Chapelle that morning, and the men had come in from it. I ate my sausage and drank my wine, and knowing that there would be a terribly heavy day to-morrow, I went to bed, in my own bed and in Marie's.

Different people have different tempers. I have a very gentle temper towards women and children, but a very bad one towards men. I went upstairs, and found my bedroom occupied by officers. That was all well and good. It was for dear old France. So I rummaged about in cupboards which I knew of, and got them blankets. Two had been at La Chapelle, were wounded and groaning. I got them on to Marie's bed, and did the best I could with them. I told them all that this was my father's house, and that they and the Emperor were my

guests, and then I went downstairs, and in a *particular manner* opened my father's wine cellar, to get them some wine.

The Germans never found out that trick, and they don't know it now. It was an invention of my father's. You had only to press your thumb heavily on the lower part of the lock, and the whole thing came open. My father says that he was brought into the world to lose keys, and so he made this arrangement. My mother never learnt the trick. She is very like Mrs. Shandy.

I took a light and looked round; there was no one near. I pressed the spring and went into the wine cellar. In one instant I had a hand in my hair, and I saw a knife flash towards my left breast.

As God's mercy would have it, I had my scarlet and white cloak on; that saved me. The candle was thrown down but was not put out. I fought, but it was only with a woman. I got her wrists in mine, and looked at her by the light of the candle.

It was Mère Mathilde.

‘You old wretch!’ I said; ‘why did you want to stab me?’

‘I did not want to stab *you*,’ she said; ‘I thought that I was discovered.’

‘What are you doing here?’

‘I am told off by the Carbonari to assassinate the Emperor, the Decembriseur. Do you know that you are denounced?’

‘By whom?’

‘By the Carbonari.’

‘Take them my bitter defiance,’ I replied.

‘Jacques Cartier and Mark are both denounced also. And the Fenians are determined to have the Queen of England’s life.’

‘The Fenians are great fools,’ I said; ‘but they are not such idiots as to turn the world against them by killing the most pure, spotless, and august lady in the world. You must go out of the house, or I will give you up.’

She went, and I took some bottles of

wine and went upstairs with them. When I got upstairs, there were not two men on my bed, but three. The third was the young staff officer who had previously offended me. I told him that this was my house, and that was my bed. I would gladly share my bed with a wounded comrade, but I requested him to get off it. He lay there and smoked; I sadly wanted some one to quarrel with, and I found him. I took him by the heels, and had him off the bed on to the floor. I never had greater satisfaction in doing anything in my life.

There was of course a terrible quarrel, and an arrangement to meet on the next morning. He was fearfully angry, and said that one of us must die. I quite agreed if it pleased him, and laughed in his face. I had not the remotest intention of fighting him. In the first place no married man is forced to fight unless his wife or sister is in question; and in the second place, the idea

of two staff officers fighting in the presence of the enemy was absurd. I let him fume, and lay down beside my two wounded friends to sleep.

I slept on that night of doom without a dream. I rose once only, to get one of my wounded friends some water. I looked out of the window, and saw that the stars were shining. One of the most beautiful nights I ever saw was that night of the 31st of August. What will the night before the day of judgment be like?

It was before dawn when I was awakened by a *chasseur-à-pied*. I rose, and he said,

‘General Ducrot wants you. Come.’

I rose and made myself very tidy (we French do that quicker than you English can), and I went down to him. He was sitting in his shirt-sleeves, writing.

‘M. Schneider,’ he said, ‘you know these parts well?’

‘I have the honour to entertain his

Majesty the Emperor and General Ducrot as my guests. This house is my father's, and I was born here.'

'You know the way to Givonne?'

I laughed. 'Does M. le General know the way round Madame Ducrot's flower-garden?'

He smiled faintly. 'To-day is the end of all things, or I should laugh at your fatality. Surely *you* will not be killed?'

'Surely not, General,' I answered.

'How far is it from here at Fond de Givonne to Givonne?'

'Two miles.'

'Get your horse and go to the height above Givonne; take this to the colonel of the 17th of the line. Make haste.'

I left him instantly, and got my horse saddled.

The 17th of the line! It was Mark's regiment. I should go through it with them, and my brother and I should meet in death.

I rode towards Givonne as hard as I could go, but before I reached there the fate of France was sealed.*

* The author wishes it to be understood that he saw the battle of Sedan from the *German* side, and merely gives his own account of it from a very careful examination of the dead on the 3d, when very few had been buried. It would seem that no coherent account of this battle has been published as yet, unless it is in Messrs. Cassell's *History of the War*. It appears to him that no consistent account of any battle was ever published since the world began. The most coherent accounts of battles are those of Thermopylæ, Salamis, Trafalgar, and Waterloo, but no one agrees about them. Younger readers must remember that the battle of Sedan was by far the greatest which has ever been seen; 80,000 prisoners and an Emperor, with six hundred cannon. The world has never seen the like.

CHAPTER XX.

THEY moved so suddenly and sharply that we were not ready for them. I could see the stars still when it began. The 17th were sleeping in the potato and onion field on the left off the road when I rode up. My horse, Rataplan, stepped gingerly among the sleeping bodies, and I found the Colonel of the 17th on horseback and smoking. I gave him General Ducrot's orders, and he read them.

'Lieutenant,' he said, 'my men are as tired as dogs; the Saxons also must be tired: you are well mounted; ride across those two fields, and see what you can. Bugler, sound *réveille*.'

My ride was never accomplished; I got to the little hedge above the cutting in the

road just as the bugler blew, and I saw four young men, without their boots, rise from the straw in which they were lying, and look sleepily about them. The next instant the devil's game began.

Within two hundred yards a terrible but not continuous volley of musketry poured in on us from the Saxons. The four men near me went down at once. I was not hit, strange to say, but of the four men sleeping in the *paille*, only one rose again. He was bareheaded and in his stockinged feet. He began to fire rapidly across the cutting, and I saw a tall Saxon, a nice-looking young gentleman, roll off his horse sideways, with his hands to his head. My instinct told me that he was dead, and I was sorry for him, for, after all, our quarrel was not with the Saxons, but with the Prussians. I fired as rapidly as I could with my revolver, with the solitary pair of red breeches before me; I knew my young man was badly wounded, and I called to

him to come to the rear, but he would not. We were now partly protected by the little hedge, and I kept my horse's nose carefully against a poplar tree. My wounded young man also seemed to me to know what he was about, for he kept his head very carefully behind another poplar tree. How well I know those poplar trees now!

It was three minutes before the regiment was aroused. During that time the young man and I were simply fighting the whole of the 29th regiment of Saxons. It was no deed of heroism at all; they had nothing to fire at except us, and like really good soldiers as they were, they having knocked over the outpost, had nothing to fire at except us two, and as we were behind trees they could not hit us. I heard my young man laughing.

Then I saw the ghastly steel blue line of the Saxon rifles go to the shoulder, and I knew that the 17th were in fighting order. I gave one glance behind, only one, and I

saw two or three strange things, as I was loading my revolver.

The regiment was coming on in line, through the potato field. The Colonel was leading in the centre on a tall chestnut horse. The sun had scarcely risen, but the light of the morning was on their tired hungry faces.

Then I looked behind the Colonel, and I saw my own father's house.

Then I saw before me a staff officer in blue, and I saw that men were coming with spades. 'Are they going to bring artillery to their centre?' I thought. Prussians would never do that. They were pitching the earth about, however. I fired six shots at the staff officer, but I could not hit him. I rode to the next tree where the young man was, and I said,

'Pick off that staff officer.'

'I can't hit him,' said the young man; 'he is covered.'

'Run out,' I said, 'to the next tree.'

I can't hit him with this English revolver. Try that for old France ; if it is suddenly done the chances are two hundred to one in your favour : you will cover him from the next tree.'

I rode with him from the one tree to the other, and gave him a hold of my stirrup. My horse was hit through the neck, but the young man, who kept his face averted from me, never reached the other tree, and never killed the Saxon officer. The horrible affray was well on between the two regiments now, and I saw my young man throw away his rifle, and hang heavily on to my stirrup.

Then, for the first time, he turned his face to mine, and fell dead.

O, heaven, send us pity in this wicked world ! It was my brother Mark. Gained only to be lost !

CHAPTER XXI.

I BELIEVE that if a curse could kill, I should have killed the whole German army that day, from the brutes of Prussians (who had not so very much to do with it) down to the gentle and refined Bavarian Tyrolese. The Saxons dashed at us and beat us; there is no use in disguising the matter. The reason why the Saxons beat us is simply that they fought better. In my opinion, the people who fought best of all in that wretched war were the Bavarians. And look what the Prussians said of them and the other armies of the Bund in old times. Yet they can put them forward to win at Sedan and at Orleans. I tell you young English gentleman, that the Emperor of the French's calculations about

the independent states refusing to join Prussia in a war against France were not entire leagues wrong. It was a very doubtful matter; and it is my opinion that if my father had not been told by the Jews he would have been ruined.

You have, most of you, been in a sham fight; for you English exercise arms very much. In fact, I see that the aristocratic college of Eton marches to-day four hundred to Wimbledon, to engage in battle with your gigantic cuirassiers of the guard. This appears to me at first sight dangerous. I do not like when strong men are mounted to horse against boys. It is not a place for reflections at all, but we French think always. Paris is the centre for intelligence and thought now, as Rome was in old times.

Well, a sham fight differs not very much from a real one, if you have nerve. In a sham fight no one is killed, but in a real one you merely miss your comrade, and

whether you are in advance or retreat, you know nothing about him. In not one hundred real fights do you get such an incident as that of my meeting my brother at Sedan in the supreme moment. That is why Horace Vernet's pictures, lovely as they are, are totally false. The only war picture I ever saw which was not false was one called 'The Effect of a Prussian Shell,' and those of your English M. Simpson, of the *Illustrated London News*, who has your English *sang-froid* to such an extreme extent, that he executes tableaux of the most divine under the heaviest fire. Your Doctor Russell, again, is a brave boy, and in no other country would you find a physician risking his life to tell of battles, while he neglects the wounded. But you English are not like the others.

[We beg to inform Captain Schneider that Doctor Russell is *not* a physician, but that he was made Doctor of Common Law by the University of Oxford

for his glorious services as a journalist.—
ED.]

[Captain Schneider writes in return :
‘Then I was right when I said that you
English did nothing like others. In France
we should have given Doctor Russell the
Legion of Honour of the first class. In
England you make him a judge. What
would be thought in France if one re-
warded Vinoy by making him a Doctor of
the Sorbonne? Do the only honours come
from your universities?’]

[Answer from Editor. ‘No. A large
number of Civil C.B., or Commanderships
of the Bath, have been given to civilians
lately. These all emanate from the Queen,
the fountain of honour in our country.
That is the crowning honour which we
can give to any civilian. The gentlemen se-
lected for this honour are carefully chosen
by the most august lady in the world, and
most men would give ten years of their
life to write the letters after their name.

Next to this honour, the highest honour which a civilian can receive is that of D.C.L., given by our two great seats of learning. May I ask if you will continue your account of the battle of Sedan, or let me know?']

[Answer from Captain Schneider. 'I will not write another word until you tell me whether the Victoria Cross is given to civilians?']

[Answer from Editor. 'Lord bless the man, no. It is a military order. We reward civilians for bravery by the medal of the Humane Society. Do go on; we shall be late again this month.']

[Captain Schneider writes: 'I refuse to go on until I express my opinion that you English are no good at all. I am sorry to have been led into this discussion; but I will register my thought that the Queen is ill-advised not to do as we do in France, to give the highest honour to those who distinguish themselves. Are Miss Night-

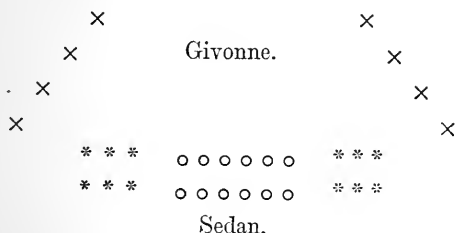
ingale, Miss Burdett Coutts, or Miss Mary Stanley, V.C. or C.B.? I say nothing of the two English ladies who came into burning Bazeilles.’]

[Editor writes: ‘How many legions of honour have been given to ladies in France?’ And Captain Schneider does not know, but sends us some more copy, and high time too.]

CHAPTER XXII.

Do you perceive that if you fire straight on a regiment in line you have only the chance of hitting two men at the outside; whereas if you can turn the flank of a regiment, you have your chance at one hundred men instead of at two. Our flank was turned, and what was happening to our regiment was happening to our whole army. Both our flanks were turned. In the case of the whole army we were by nine o'clock in this position, if our editor will kindly allow us a little diagram. The crosses go for *German* artillery, the naughts go for *French* artillery, and the asterisks for French infantry. The matter was altered after, before eleven, because the cavalry were then hard at work, but at, say, from seven to

nine o'clock, the battle was very much like this :



This plan is utterly deficient, for the Bavarians had turned Bazeilles, and had burnt it on our *real left*, which is the right in the above plan. If you reverse it you will see that throughout that day, and throughout many other days, we infantry never got near the Germans without being heavily pounded by artillery. My poor friend Rossel, who took to the Radicals, sees this very clearly. The Germans risked their guns and kept them, we refused to risk ours and lost them.

I am sorry to say that after six o'clock, I, inexperienced as I was, saw a disaster impending. Our Colonel never lost his

head for a moment, but when the artillery fire came full upon us, I regret to say that some of our officers did. Our men fought like Turks or Frenchmen, but some of our officers were by no means up to the mark. We were beaten back point after point. Our Colonel was not hit, as I thought, and I thought that I was not hit myself, till I noticed a long streak of blood down my white cloak. The Colonel, at whose side I was, said, 'You are hit, my child. I also am hit with a death-wound. Take this, Schneider. Allons, mes braves, vous gagnez toujours.'

He tore a gold chain from round his neck with a locket hanging to it, and gave it to me. 'You will see to whom to give it. Allons, mes garçons ! Allons, mes enfants !'

We made three mad dashes at the Saxons, but the good fellows held their own, and their artillery was playing upon us over their heads with fearful rapidity. By

nine o'clock our regiment had become a disorderly mob, and to my unutterable astonishment, as I looked round I saw that we were at the head of the street of Fond de Givonne.

Suddenly the Colonel shouted to me in a strange voice, 'Ride to the right, Schneider. Catch the Emperor or Ducrot, and tell him that all is lost here unless we are reinforced.' He rolled heavily off his saddle. I dashed away to the right, knowing every lane in the country for miles round.

The frightful ruin and confusion was the worst ever known in war. We were pent into the crater of Vesuvius. I was getting horridly sick, with a fearful thirst upon me; but I found the Emperor in *Sieur Delafone's* garden. They were preparing a last charge, which the Emperor was to head. I began speaking of reinforcements. He waved his hand and smiled. 'Join our charge, my boy,' he said, 'that is the best reinforcement.'

‘Up that lane, sire,’ I said ; ‘and keep under the walls. I will show the way.’

That charge was made, but I never saw it.

A general said to me, ‘Ride to the right within our lines, and get to Vinoy. Tell him that if everything be lost, he must get to Paris. They have turned our left ; tell him to mind he sees that the right is not turned.’

I was very sick and faint, getting worse and worse. I was in the *mêlée* again. I drew up suddenly among a company of Turcos, who were fighting very well. Their only officer was wounded, and seeing cavalry coming down on us I gave the word for rallying square, and had the savages round me in a moment.

The German cavalry came up at us full gallop, a very foolish thing to do. The young gentleman who led them, a fine fellow, was unhorsed, and one or two of the front rank were killed. They wheeled ; the

young German gentleman running with a trooper's stirrup in his hand. Two or three stupid savages, seeing his orders, ran out at him to get them. They were at us again in a minute, and sent us flying, for our ranks were broken; but this young gentleman was unhorsed, and apparently forgetting the circumstances ran among the Turcos, cutting right and left. I knew what would happen. I cannot tell what happens with Turcos. I saw that ten or so were lying down and shamming dead. I saw a Turco ready with his rifle, and I held up both my hands to him as I rode up.

'I am your prisoner, sir,' I said; 'come here!'

He came to take me, and I seized him with my failing strength and hoisted him on the saddle before me. I thought that I was going to die, and I wished to save one life, even if it were a Prussian's. I have learnt to like the Prussians better since, but I hated them then.

As I trotted towards my captors, the savage dogs gave me a volley in my rear, which hit me through the shoulder, but which never hit my captor.

He told me afterwards that the German cavalry then and there exterminated those Turcos.

For me, my captor did not get his will of my person; for in the first place he thought I was dead, and in the second one of the finest parts of the cavalry business at Sedan was fought right before me as I was lying on the ground. I was not unconscious, and I prayed. I fear I prayed that the Germans might win, because I should have been stamped into pieces if they had lost.

The Chasseurs of Barbary had made a last mad charge against my Germans. I could see the flicker of the swords like lightning on the summer night. This German regiment was in line, do you see, and so beyond the dark blue line of the fighting

Germans, I could perfectly well see the white and scarlet of our men. Strangely enough, as it seemed to me, my Germans beat back our men. That seemed very strange, because, as I remarked before, the Germans being in line, there were but two Germans between me and one of the most splendid cavalry regiments in the world.

I was not in much pain; I was beyond pain, and I thought about it. Wellington, a man who never lost a battle or a gun, the *cleverest* general of the last generation, rebuked your George IV. by telling him that the French cavalry were the best in the world; yet I saw what I should have thought the crack regiment in Europe go back before men I should have called German louts. There was no demoralisation. The men fought like *men*, and, as far as I could see, their swordsmanship was splendid. In fact, all the world knows that I laugh in speaking of it. But they were driven back

in fair fight, though Miss Dixon tells me that she and Miss Braby found ten Germans in that part of the field to one Frenchman. Colonel Descorches says that our Chasseurs were underhorsed, and that the horses had not been fed. That seems to me very probable indeed. You also, if a volunteer (as I hope you are), should listen to Colonel Descorches, because he says that your volunteers, with a very trifling assistance from your Government, might be made one of the most dangerous bodies of men in Europe.

Ah, you should hear the Colonel on the Battle of Dorking. Eh! but he is amusing this, Colonel. He says: 'The English are so triste that they must amuse themselves with something. They amuse themselves with the Battle of Dorking. My dear, if the battle ever came through their own insensate stupidity, it would not make itself at Dorking at all, but 226 kilometres from there.'

The Colonel amuses himself with you English. Without doubt you amuse yourself with me, for my French way of telling a story.

I am at present, do you perceive, lying dying on the field of Sedan.

I wish to point out to you that I did not die. I wish to make this clear to you at once by a single question. If I had died who could have written this story? Therefore I did not die at all. I beg a hundred thousand pardons for pointing out the fact, but you English have no logic, whereas we French are logical to a fault.

Mind, I do not assert that the logic of the Comte de Chambord, the logic of M. Thiers, the logic of M. Gambetta, or the logic of the Commune is quite infallible. The only infallible logic is the house of Orleans. But you English are so illogical that we French have to prove everything in a most indisputable manner to you, and so I have had to prove to you that if I had died at Se-

dan, I could not possibly have written this story.*

* Mr. Henry Kingsley emphatically refuses to submit to Mr. Edmund Routledge M. Schneider's essay on the comparative immorality of the occupation of Hindostan by the English, and of Algeria by the French. As for employing savages like the Turcos in European warfare, the English have never done such a thing.

(The Printer's Boy wants to know who subsidised the Indians in North America. To this low boy we answer, that circumstances alter cases, which we should be inclined to think is answer enough for *him*.)

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE roar died away as I lay perfectly quiet, but, as I well knew, very heavily wounded. I lay with my face towards Givonne, and so the last thing I heard of the battle was the cannonade and fusillade of Vinoy's retreat towards Paris. I knew perfectly well that we were beaten again, but like a true Frenchman I took it as a matter of course.

Your English generals never fight unless they are sure to win. That peak-nosed Wellington of yours never moved from the lines of Torres Vedras till he knew that he could win every battle. He called Busaco 'a political battle,' he only fought there because your Parliament wanted a victory in order to obtain supplies. Your Duke was a very great man, in his way greater than Napoleon. He knew, that man Wellington.

What does he say? 'I consider that the presence of Napoleon amounts in fact to the presence of thirty thousand men.' Hah, he values Napoleon's intellect at the rate of thirty thousand men. Are we French nothing then?

Well, do not be hard on us. I will allow that Napoleon was half Greek, half Italian: We in a matter of detail are cleverer than you others, that we attract all the cleverest men in the world. We attract, for example, the Americans. The Americans say, 'Good Americans when they die go to Paris.' The English are partly attracted to us; the Prussians not at all; *we should like to catch them at it.*

I was with Jacques Cartier only as it was yesterday in Versailles. Count Arnim drove by. I saw Jacques Cartier had on his sword-bayonet, and I pulled it back and kissed him in our French way. He said, 'You are right, sweetheart' (that is the way I render *bien-aimé* into English); 'not yet.'

If we had invaded you successfully, if we had occupied your glorious southern provinces, and if we had treated you as the Prussians have treated us, what would have been the value of a Frenchman's life in England? Your papers talk of us as passionate and furious, they tell us to submit to affairs. What right have they to dictate to us? You never helped us, you could not; but now you tell us to be calm and to submit. Would the conquerors of Hindostan be very calm and submissive with a French army in Kent, Surrey, and Sussex? I think not. I hope not.

Once more. I ask you why the man Bismarck did not trust us, without insulting us by occupying the provinces? I ask that.

[The editor is very sorry to fall out with Captain Schneider again, but he must remind him of the piratical wars of the first Napoleon, during which everything, from fire-irons to porcelain and Raphael pictures,

was stolen and carried away to Paris. In the last war no *bêtises* of the kind have occurred. The burning of the Strasburg library was a mere accident, and the removal of the Metz library to Berlin is no great harm after all. It is far safer at Berlin than at Metz. We must let M. Schneider continue his adventures.]

I was lying quite comfortably, because a woman in a red petticoat had brought me some more water. But the sun was very hot, and I put my pretty white cloak over my head. It must have been long past two when I heard two voices talking near me.

I knew German as well as a Frenchman can, but I was puzzled by their accent. It was like the croaking of frogs. I cannot reproduce it. They stood on each side of me.

‘The Herr Hauptmann says that the French officers are not to be buried with the French soldiers,’ said one.

‘That seems to me a distinction,’ said the other.

‘It is distinct, not different,’ said the other.

‘Give me plain German for that,’ said the other German.

‘Fool, thou hast had no education. Thou knowest not logic.’

‘No, but I know a pretty Frenchman when I see him. Look at his red legs, his white gaiters, his white cloak with the scarlet lining. Why should such a pretty fellow be killed? It is too bad, Caspar.’

I raised my white cloak from my face, and looked at them. They were two great giants in blue, with great heads, and they bent over me.

‘We thought you were dead,’ said one.

‘No, but I am prisoner. I am very hardly hit, but I think that if I could get to an ambulance I might be saved. I want to see my wife again.’

‘Do you mean to say,’ said the largest

of the Germans, 'that a smooth-faced boy like you is married?'

'Yes, sir,' I said, for I was getting very thirsty and very humble; 'I am married, and what is more'—I went into other particulars.

Caspar said to Fritz, 'Carry the boy down to the barn, put him in the straw with the others. I never heard such a story as this. Why, he does not look fifteen.'

In one minute I was in the arms of the great German barbarian. My cheek fell into his beard, and I spoke to him.

'Are you one of those Prussians?' I asked.

'*I am a Pomeranian,*' he said, '*a Prussian, if you choose.*'

'Ah ah!' I replied; 'Pomerania is where the amber comes from, and also the pretty little white dogs.'

'That is the place, officer.'

I turned my face over his shoulder and saw my white cloak drooping over his

broad blue back. (I must pause to say that the above-named white cloak served me in a singular way, as you shall hear.) He carried me as a full-grown man does an infant.

At last we came to a barn, where there was straw on the ground, into which he laid me very gently, telling me that there were only eighteen or twenty others, and then he went away.

But not for long. He came back with some water in a large pitcher, and then he wanted to give me money, but I told him that I had abundance; and I begged him to do a small commission for me. It is absolutely horrible that such men should be killed. Men with every virtue and all courage put up to fight for what they know not. I say again that it is horrible, this war. In the morning I would have shot this man down like a dog. At mid-day I was blessing him, and was determined (although a Huguenot to the backbone)

that my mother should have eighty masses at ten francs each said for his soul.

As I am now lying in the straw in an old barn (which happened to be the property of my own father, if it mattered), and as I have nothing else to tell you, I may mention that when all was over my mother offered this sum to Père Lasel, to do as I wished. He, though a needy man, emphatically refused both money and masses. He was a man of such staunch principles that he would not even pray for a heretic's soul. Some Jesuits will not. I fear that the Emperor's order for the expulsion of the Jesuits will come very hardly on him. He was a very good man, and was not doing very much harm. But the Emperor is right, you cannot have a state within a state.

I lay here for above twenty-four hours, with nothing at all to eat. A German doctor, who was very kind, came in and dressed my wounds. But we got nothing to eat;

and then we had bread and water, for which we thanked God.

I could not move in the straw, and I only could talk to one of the men beside me, a Breton, for the man who lay on the other side of me was an Arab, who knew no French at all beyond the words of command. I shared my water with them, and dozed and dreamed my time away until the afternoon of the third.

So strange to be lying in my own barn on the straw. Marie, Marie! where was she now? I got better in the afternoon of the third, and I got up and crawled about assisting the others. I had gold, and I offered it to the sentry for bread. I think that he would have liked the gold, but he told me that there was no bread till five o'clock, and refused my money, asking me to lie down again and rest. This young man came from Ems in Nassau. They must be good people in those parts. I did not lie down, but sat in the sun be-

side him. He was a married man like myself, and we talked about home and love, until I got weary and crept back to the straw.

My neighbour, the Turco, was snoring comfortably, but my poor Breton was quite dead.

Don't think me a fool or a coward if I tell you that I cried myself to sleep. The only French voice audible to me was stilled for ever.

I took his dead hand in mine as I fell asleep.

I was awakened by some one turning my face over. Two men were kneeling beside me. One I knew at once—he was the brown - bearded English journalist whom I met at Mondorf. The other was a man I had never seen before. I smiled and showed my teeth, which a certain lady says are very good teeth.

‘Here is an officer,’ said the journalist.

‘Yes,’ said the other, an eminent London surgeon, as I afterwards knew. ‘My dear sir, when were you fed last?’

‘Twenty-four hours ago, dear sir.’

‘You must be fed, dear sir, or you will die.’

‘I shall not be fed,’ I replied, smiling; ‘and I shall not die.’

‘What,’ said the surgeon to the journalist, ‘would you give for a bottle of Liebig’s extract *now*?’

‘Ten pounds,’ said the journalist.

‘I would give twenty,’ said the surgeon; ‘but that is *esprit de corps*. I could save this gentleman, and I could save half the barn, if there was plenty of Liebig. Now, my dear,’ he said, ‘I must trouble you to take off that pretty white cloak, which I regret to see is streaked with blood, and that pretty blue tunic, and let me look at you.’

I did so.

‘So,’ he said, ‘you are doing very well;’

and then he put on my clothes again, with the gentleness of a nurse.

‘Here are biscuits and a little brandy. That Turco next you has drank more than his share, but there is a drain left for you. What is the matter with the Chasseur next you, whose hand you were holding? He seems to be sleeping well.’

‘O,’ I said, ‘he was dead before I went to sleep. He is a Breton. He was married as I was, and we talked as we lay here of our wives and of old times. So I took his dead hand in mine as I fell asleep. Are the French going to win and come back here?’

‘I fear not,’ said the journalist.

‘*N’importe*,’ I replied. ‘But if they do, tell General Ducrot that the sentinel at the door was very kind to me, and that if he is made a prisoner, my father will take him at Cologne, and treat him well.’

‘My boy,’ said the English doctor, ‘do you know what has happened?’

‘No, sir.’

‘Your Emperor has surrendered with eighty thousand men, who are on their way to Germany.’

I rose from my straw and stood erect. I said one word three times in my injustice:

‘Dog, dog, dog!’

Then I lay down again, and dozed after they had gone. In the intervals of my dozing I tried to think. Could he not have died? Could he not have led us to death? Eighty thousand men! Where were Ulrich and Bazaine? Thank heaven, still threatening the enemy’s lines of communication. Alas, I knew nothing, none of us did. So I dozed, and two ladies woke me up this time.

These ladies were obviously English by their accent. They were dressed in gray gowns, and had large red crosses on their breasts.

‘How are you doing, sir?’ said the taller.

‘I am better, madam. Have the Germans violated the neutrality of Luxemburg and Belgium, and turned our right again?’

‘No,’ said the shorter lady; ‘they have behaved perfectly well in that respect. They have, however, masked hopelessly both Bazaine and Urich. Paris must go, and at the same time you must drink this.’

If I could love a Prussian, it would be Liebig; but he was not a Prussian, I think, but a Nassauan from Giessen. This short English lady gave me diluted Liebig with a little brandy in it, and made me feel like a man again.

‘Now, officer,’ said the taller lady; ‘please to show us your worst cases. Can you stand?’

‘I can stand,’ I said; ‘but I am not in charge here. I will do all I can for you. You need not mind this man here, he is dead.’

‘Quite so,’ said the taller lady, turning

over his face; 'would you be so kind as to close his eyes, my dear?' to the other lady. 'This Turco is not dead, however; mind his knife, my love; remember the escape you had at Bazeilles.'

I was thinking dreamily that English ladies must have a way of looking at things rather coolly, when a certain incident happened. As the taller lady was exhibiting Liebig and brandy to the Turco, I reeled and stumbled against the shorter lady. She caught hold of me, and laid me down in my original straw.

'Bother the dear boy, he is not fit to be moved,' she remarked; 'had not we better have her in, and make her see to him?'

'I think so,' said the tall lady; 'it is a nuisance that he can't be moved. This Turco here will make a mess of his leg, if we can't get this bullet out. I wonder where Dr. Kerkstone is? O, here he is, and alone. Who on earth is to hold the arteries?'

'I will do that,' said the shorter lady.

And she did it, and I could give you her name, if she would allow me.

The taller lady called to the sentry, and said :

‘Send in that French drummer-boy, if you please.’

I saw a French drummer-boy in the door, and I wished him anywhere else, for I wanted a *Sœur de Charité* rather badly, and from what I heard I thought there was one near. However, a drummer was better than no one at all; so, as he came to me, I merely lay quietly over, and I said :

‘You will have to slit my tunic, and also my shirt, for I believe that I am bleeding again. Be so good as to ask the doctor to see to me when he has done with the others.’

‘Yes, sir.’

I started. Was it Mark’s brother? No; Mark had no brother.

The drummer-boy came to me, and pulled out a knife to cut my tunic. Then

he put his hand over my neck, and kissed me twice.

I turned in wrath; the liberty was unpardonable. But in one instant the kisses which the drummer-boy had given me were paid back with interest.

For the drummer-boy was Marie—my own dear wife.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SHE had run away from Cologne, it seemed, to get to me. She had met these good English ladies at Luxemburg first, and had told them the whole truth about the matter. Had she stayed with them she could have got to me perfectly well, but at the passage of the Archduke this simply happened, a thing which our brown-bearded journalist saw with his own eyes:

A lady was sitting at the table d'hôte, when a foolish man came in from Thionville, and told us that the left of Bazaine was turned, and that the eleventh Chasseurs were cut to pieces. The lady rose and left the room, her son was in that regiment. That the (then) left of Bazaine was turned, was perfectly true, but the eleventh Chas-

seurs were never engaged in the grand passage.

As this lady left the table, our journalist noticed that a pretty little woman rose and followed her. In a few minutes after, the journalist followed both of them, and found that they were going to Metz in an open carriage.

The little woman was Marie. She had run away from my father and mother, and was coming to me. My brown-bearded journalist wanted to get to Metz himself, and offered a large sum of money to the courier of the two ladies. The courier emphatically refused to take him at any price at all, and frankly informed the Englishman that he was a French spy and dared not. Jacques Cartier tells me that the Englishman offered him forty pounds sterling to get him through. 'It was a great temptation to me,' said Jacques; 'but the thing had been done once or twice too often, and I had no particular wish to be hung, but I

wanted to get Marie to you above all things, and to tell General Ducrot that they were respecting the frontier inexorably, and that if we could hold on by our left we were all right still.'

Marie, as we lay in the straw, told me the rest. Jacques Cartier had got her on from one post to another, trying to get her to me, and trying to get himself to General Ducrot (a man he swears by). In seeking Ducrot he went too far to the right, and when he crossed the frontier for the third time, near Mézières, he found himself close to the Bavarians, at least so close as to be very unpleasant.

He was a man of resources; the 97th of the line was there, and he spoke to the Colonel.

'Sir, I must get to Ducrot. But I have a young lady with me, who says that she must see her husband.'

'*Diantre!* I hope I may see my wife again,' said the Colonel.

‘Cannot you get her on to an ambulance as nurse?’ said Jacques Cartier.

‘There are none of the neutral ambulances within three miles,’ said the Colonel; ‘and we shall certainly fight to-morrow. It is not safe for any woman. Stay, I have a plan. Go and fetch the lady.’

Marie was fetched.

‘Madame,’ said the Colonel, ‘I understand that you wish to see your husband, who is on Ducrot’s staff.’

‘Yes, sir; I wish to see him. I must see him. I have something to say to him.’

‘Madame, my wife has often much to say to me,’ said the Colonel; ‘and I have known her sit up till three o’clock in the morning to say it. But I doubt even for the sake of scolding me, that she would do what you *must* do if you intend to go on.’

‘What is that, Monsieur?’

‘To wear the clothes of a drummer.’

‘Mais, M’sieu?’

‘It is the only way, Madame. I can get

you to the Geneva ambulance in that way, and in no other. With the ambulance I will trust you. You must, I think, go on now that you have come so far. But you must go in uniform. Do you consent?’

Marie thought for an instant, and then said,

‘Yes, I will see him; though I think I shall see him dead.’

‘A good resolution. Now, my good lady, my time is precious. You will find a Sister of Charity below who will cut your hair off.’

‘My hair—O, Monsieur!’

‘Madame, I cannot argue. My regiment will be engaged with the Bavarians to-morrow, and if you go at all you must march as a drummer-boy. Your plan is to get with the English ambulance. Give this note to the Sister of Charity downstairs, and she will attend to everything which you can want.’

That was all. She went through it all

to try and get to me. The two English ladies were preparing for their awful march on their two wagons, when they saw a beautiful boy running towards them.

‘Ladies,’ said the boy, ‘I am not a young man, but I am a woman, and I want to see my husband.’

In a moment she was in the straw of the wagon; the rest is soon told. She hunted me until she found me. Then she lay in the straw beside me, and cared for my wounds.

CHAPTER XXV.

SHE had not been long at my wounds, when there came suddenly into the barn a group of German officers, whom I knew *not* to be Prussians, because they took their shakos off when they saw our two English ladies. I recognised the foremost among them at once, it was the man whose life I saved in the battle of Sedan, and whose prisoner I was.

I whispered to Marie, 'Keep quiet, darling, keep quiet! Hide that white cloak of mine. I fought that man.'

Marie covered me as well as she could, and the tall German spoke to the two English ladies in English.

'I am the Prince of Hetmold, ladies. I

have come here for a French officer with a white cloak lined with scarlet.'

'We really cannot have our patients disturbed, your royal highness,' said the taller lady; and the shorter lady said, 'Certainly not.'

'I do not want to disturb him, but I want to recognise him,' said Prince Hetmold; and one of his staff said, 'We want nothing but good.'

'Well, here is a French officer in a white cloak lined with scarlet,' said the taller lady; 'he is the only one we have. -- See if he is your man. Madame, let the Prince see if it is the man he wants. He sha'n't be moved, and that is flat.'

The Prince knelt over me, and we interchanged smiles. 'Please do not move me,' I said, 'for I am very ill.'

'You saved my life, and you are also my prisoner. What can I do for you?'

'Save me from going to Germany. I will not give my parole to serve against the

Germans in this war. I cannot do it. I wish that I could, but I cannot. I only ask to be left with her, for a very few months.'

'With *her!* with whom?'

I pointed to Marie.

'He is a drummer-boy,' said the Prince in amazement.

The English ladies bent and whispered to him a short time. He rose with his face flushed.

'You French beat us in romance. But I have no power. My hands are tied by Prussia. Can you make *no* terms, my Frenchman?'

Marie stood up and spoke. Her shako was off, and her hair was all gone; it had been cut off close to her skull, so that you could see the splendid shape of her head. She said, 'Yes, he will make terms, this husband of mine. He will give his parole to go to Cologne with me till my baby is born. We go to his father and mother. We

live quietly; and when the child is born he shall go; is that enough?’

‘My dear lady,’ said the Prince humbly, ‘will he not have a difficulty in leaving Prussia?’

‘Not if the Prussians keep their word,’ said Marie.

‘I will try to get those terms for you,’ said the Prince; ‘but really I am very, very doubtful.’

‘Try,’ said Marie.

‘Try,’ said the two English ladies.

I must ‘try’ to tell you the result in another chapter.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THERE were present, Prussia, Saxony, Wurtemberg, Baden, Nassau, Hanover, Bavaria, and Hetmold. None of the others were there, which was fortunate, because there would have been a worse row than there was, and as it was it was pretty bad. The whole row was about *me*.

I was the *casus belli*; that is to say, they had all been wanting something with which to blow off the steam of the united Fatherland, and they selected *me*. We French can squabble pretty well, and burn half Paris down in doing it; but the united Fatherland beats us in strong language. To gather the sentiments of a Saxon or Bavarian, Tyrolese, or Prussian, is to get a very splendid lesson in Teutonic oaths.

We Latins can't swear to any great extent. I could write an essay on Teutonic oaths, but I should have to use so much bad language that I could not get it published. Ask, I repeat, a Southern German what he thinks of Prussia. I think that you would get a little bad language if you did so.

All these persons were at a village a very short distance beyond Sedan, on the Paris road.

It was the last time they met before they met at Versailles. Hetmold, it may be said, was notoriously the spokesman among the little German States, against the overwhelming hegemony of Prussia. He was a dear young fellow, good enough for a Frenchman. He began it. He told me that he intended to do so.

Hetmold said to Prussia, 'O, a young French officer has saved my life, and I want to take him for my Xenos, and send him to his wife at Cologne.'

‘Has he given you his parole?’ said Prussia.

‘For three months only,’ answered Hetmold.

‘Then I cannot allow it,’ said Prussia.

‘But I request it,’ said Hetmold.

‘And I refuse it,’ said Prussia.

‘What right have you to refuse?’ said Hetmold. ‘You have no crown on your head, as I have. Where would you Prussians have been if we other German States had not been loyal to united Germany? And that does not mean Prussia, and never will.’

‘I agree with what you say,’ said Saxony, ‘but this is not the time to quarrel.’

‘I don’t know that,’ broke out Bavaria. ‘We have had more than our fair share of the fighting, and so have you, Hetmold.’

Nassau and Baden laughed approvingly. Baden whispered something to Wurtemberg, and Wurtemberg broke out laughing.

Bavaria laughed also, and begged them to be quiet.

Saxony requested, before the discussion went farther, to ask what Hetmold's contingent was.

'9400,' said Hetmold.

'And you have lost?'

'2300.'

'And Prussia refuses to give you a single officer?' said Saxony, at which Wurtemberg and Nassau laughed once more.

'Yes, I do,' said Prussia. 'I know who the officer is. He is a spy, and a Carbonaro.'

'Prove it,' said Hetmold.

'I can prove it very easily,' said Prussia. 'My cousin knows this gentleman perfectly well. He met him over the frontier in the Eifel with the most notorious spy in Europe, Jacques Cartier. Will that suffice you, Hetmold?'

'No!' said Hetmold stoutly, 'it will not suffice me. He refused to give his parole

for a longer time than until his wound was healed and his child born. That man is no rascal and no spy, I will take my oath.' ..

General murmurs of approval from Saxony, Wurtemberg, Baden, and Bavaria. Hanover knew nothing about Jacques Cartier, so he said nothing. Nassau knew Jacques Cartier perfectly well, because he had happened to employ him himself a short time before Sadowa. So *he* held *his* tongue.

'Jacques Cartier is his father's groom, or was rather,' said Hetmold. 'A mere boy may cross the frontier with his father's groom.'

'Not at all,' said Prussia, who declined to argue. 'I will not give up this gentleman, unless he takes his parole like the others.'

'He won't do it, you see,' said Bavaria. 'We shall get a nice name in Europe if we carry on matters as we are now. Bazeilles will be a stink in my nostrils till I die.'

‘Why did you do it then? What forced you?’

‘Your strategy. You knew it must be done. Why did you not do it yourselves?’

Prussia began to get very angry. Hetmold declares that when Bavaria said this, Prussia clapped his hand on his sword-hilt.

The smaller states and kingdoms were deeply interested. There was no doubt about Prussia’s personal courage, and a duel between Prussia and Bavaria would have been a splendid incident in the war. They all hated Prussia like poison, but they loved Fatherland better.

Bavaria said, ‘I am not going to fight you, Prussia, but you are using the armies of the smaller States a great deal more freely than you have any right to do.’

‘Why?’ said Prussia; ‘because you cannot find a general among you.’ (Which I think was hardly fair on Von der Tann, if on no one else.) ‘What did the army of the Bund ever do? They could only fight

when led by Prussians. This thing I will not do; I emphatically refuse to do it.'

Nassau, a very excellent and amiable prince, had slipped away, for he saw that there would be more high words, as indeed there were. For the smaller States felt themselves deeply aggrieved by the part they had been made to play, and most extremely disliked the dictatorial tone of Prussia. On this occasion even the gentle Saxony, irritable like most poets, forgot himself, and said that if his father had known how his son was to be treated, not a man should have marched. Matters were growing to an unseemly squabble. Hetmold nailed his colours to the mast about me, not that he could have cared for me, but on principle, as representing the smallest of the small States. Prussia was quite cool, and would not yield an inch. Wurtemberg and Saxony fell out, and had a private and nearly furious fracas between themselves, about some matter which Hetmold

told me he should never find out to his dying day. Prussia thought he would try to get out of the argument with Bavaria and Baden, by making the peace between the two new combatants. The moment he attempted to do so they were the best friends in the world, and at last he had the whole of Germany at him, with the exception of the Austrian States and Nassau, and it was apparently all about *me*.

Suddenly the door was thrown open, and Nassau said, 'The King.' There was silence at once when he entered.

'I do not like him, I suppose I never shall; but he is an impressive man,' Hetmold told me after, 'there was silence when he came in.'

He said, 'What is this of which Nassau tells me, Fritz?'

'Hetmold has been insolent to me, sire, and so has Bavaria; we are quarrelling in the face of the enemy, that is all.'

'Instead of blessing God for the great

victories He has given us. O my children! my children!

Your Dickens says that Mrs. Lupin had such a profound belief in Mr. Pecksniff, that if he had said to her 'Seven times seven is forty-nine, my good soul,' she would have treasured it as a great moral sentiment. I do not think myself, speaking as a Frenchman, and therefore strongly prejudiced, that the Emperor of Germany was a humbug, or a Pecksniff at all. He had a great deal to thank God for in the name of his nation, and he was not ashamed of doing it. I like him for it. Every nation has its *Te Deums* on a victory. There is a service in your church for it. I don't blame the man, but I do wish that he would not do it in such a very Tartuffian way.

It is a strange thing the influence that a pure domestic blameless life and continually increasing good fortune gives a man. The assembled princes had each one of them more real intellect in his little finger than

Emperor William has in his whole body. Yet they were every one afraid of him. He calmed the storm in one instant.

‘Fritz,’ said he, ‘my dear boy, let us hear clearly what is the matter.’

‘Hetmold,’ said Prussia, ‘desires me to give him up a young French officer, who refuses to give his parole for more than three months, until his wife is confined.’

‘Speak no more, Fritz, that is enough,’ and he sat down and wrote. Then beckoned to Hetmold, and whispered to him. He then wrote down my name, and had soon finished. This is the paper :

‘You are requested to let pass, into any part of the French lines he may choose, Captain Valentin Schneider, of the staff. He is the bearer of this.

‘WILLIAM.’

He handed this to the Prince of Hetmold, and said, ‘You should have come to me at first, Hetmold, instead of going to my

Fritz. You take a great interest in this young French officer.'

'Sire, he saved my life after I had taken him prisoner, and there is a story about him. He is married, and his wife has come on with some English ladies in the ambulance to be with him.'

Touch a German on sentiment and he is your man. 'Why was I not told this at first? Let him go as free as air,' said the Crown Prince.

'What is wrong with you, Bavaria?' said the Emperor.

'The same that is wrong with the other small States, your Majesty. Our men are being overworked. Ask Hetmold.'

Hetmold entirely agreed. He had lost 2300 men out of 9000.

'I will see to this, dear Bavaria, I will see to this. God bless you, my very dear children. Good night.'

He did see to it. He told Von Moltke that several of the smaller States were re-

calcitrant, more particularly Hetmold and Bavaria. Von Moltke and another gentleman took this home to their hearts. Hetmold went home to his pleasant little principedom, when all was over, with 2900 men, to be received in triumph certainly, with flowered arches and all that, but also with no less than 6000 widows, orphans, and bereaved parents; and this to a man who dearly loved his people, and whose people loved him as dearly as they hated the Prussians (which is saying a great deal), was not very agreeable. As for the work which the Bavarians were set to do, after the dispute which arose about me, you had better ask Von der Tann how many men he brought away from before Orleans.

CHAPTER XXVII.

I WAS sitting beside Marie, in the sun, when the best of princes managed to get back through the still lying dead on the 4th of September. I saw him coming with one equerry, and as he came he waved his hand to me. He took out a paper, and gave it to me. It was my freedom.

I suppose that it was because I was wounded, that my breath came so short and thick. The Prince said to me :

‘I should like to shake hands with Madame, the brave drummer; for I must ride far and fast. I fear you have cost me a thousand men.’

I pointed to Marie, who was beside me, against the wall. He had not recognised her at all. The English ladies had given

her a gray gown with a red cross on it, and no one would have known her again as the drummer-boy.

The Prince quickly kissed her hand.

‘I would have asked for a lock of your hair,’ he said gallantly, ‘but you have not got half an inch to give me. The ladies are getting all the hair which they can buy. Soon, Madame, if you wear your hair in that becoming style, you will be in the fashion. Ladies will soon be like you — *en Zouave*. — But how about your husband?’

‘I want him to go to Cologne with—’

The Prince hesitated.

‘Is that quite moral, Madame?’ said the Prince.

‘Would it not be immoral to do anything else?’ said Marie.

‘No; he is dismissed, and his country is being ruined. He has got a pass into the French lines as a dismissed prisoner, with full power to serve. We Germans under-

stand his position perfectly well. I know what I should do, if I were his age.'

'And what is that, sir?'

'I should wait here until these good Englishwomen had put me on my legs, and then I should pass into the French lines, and do what I could. Only mind, M. Schneider, that we are xenoï, and we never fight again.'

And with these words he rode away.

But he turned and came back.

'Madame Schneider,' he said, 'can you find a flower for me?'

There was a snapdragon on the wall, and she gave it to him.

'May I have a kiss, Monsieur?' he said.

I looked at her, and saw that her eyes said yes.

He bent from his saddle and kissed her. Then he was gone. I was free, and Marie and I alone in the sun together.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

I FEAR you must think but very little of me, now. I think that you must hate me. Yet, pause—would you not have done the same thing?

I was absolutely free. Was I to cast that freedom to the winds for an idea? I think not. You may think differently, but I hold my own opinion. I had to serve France before all things in this world, and if I had a technical right to serve her, I had no possible excuse to dispense with that right.

I owed my freedom to the King of Prussia, but a German prince owed his life to me. It seemed to me a perfectly equal thing. Let us, however, put to ourselves a perfectly parallel case, though an

entirely impossible one, and see how *you* would judge me.

In 1882 England was invaded by the French. The Queen had been deceived by her ministers as to the state of her fleet and armies, and had declared war on a peculiarly foolish question, with their advice. The French, by some perfectly superhuman and inconceivable manœuvres, which can only be paralleled in Don Quixote, had tempted away the British fleet. The British fleet was in some place whither the human imagination cannot follow it. Two hundred ships of war, however, were entirely missing, with the exception of the Glatton, the Hotspur, and the Devastation, not intended to go to sea, and which do not intend to go to sea at all. The Glatton did not steam ten knots an hour, and disarranged the whole business. The Coastguard and Volunteers were all at Ascot Races, and so could do nothing. The men from Alder-

shot and Colchester were not telegraphed for, and consequently did not come. So the French landed, on a perfectly undefended coast, an army of 80,000 men, with a basis of operations only secured by the French fleet, every officer in which knew perfectly well they would go to the bottom of the sea when the English fleet returned, which it might do at any moment.

Meanwhile, also, the English Government had not abrogated the Treaty of Paris, and there was not the greatest mercantile navy in the world giving the very slightest opposition to French transports. There were not five hundred steamships, ranging from 1000 to 4000 tons, armed with one gun each, handled by first-class officers as easily as river boats, cutting into the French transports in every direction. Also it is to be remarked in the *annus mirabilis* 1882, that the buoys were not removed, and torpedoes were *not* put in their place. A most remarkable fact!

Lord Westminster, Lord Salisbury, Lord Carnarvon, Lord Bute, the Duke of Bedford, the Duke of Sutherland, men with money to lose, did nothing whatever. They did not send every horse out of their stables, every carriage and wagon they had, to form a commissariat for the Volunteers. In any other year every English gentleman would have done so, but this particular year of the invasion, nobody in England did what they had always done before, and would do again the next year. It was the *annus mirabilis*.

Let me pause, and have a laugh at the invasion of England. It is too entirely absurd. I have laughed, and I will go on now. But my head aches from laughing.

Though mind, you must spend your money, you must not stint that.

I proceed with my *annus mirabilis*. In this year the Queen got very frightened

at the beginning, for the first time in her life. The southern farmers, who, as it is well known, have no horses, never moved their goods. The consequence was, that the French army lived upon Liebig's extract and hogs. You suggest bacon? Well, that shows your penetration. There was much bacon certainly, but in the *annus mirabilis* it was tainted with trichinites, and made our men ill. There was beef also, but the foot and mouth disease was bad in Kent that year, and so the beef disagreed with our men worse than the pork.

The British ministry were all very ill in consequence of drinking ginger-beer at Greenwich. Mr. Gladstone was very ill indeed, because he had to speak four hours fifty-nine minutes and three-quarters to his constituency, before he got one mouthful of dinner. Nobody did anything at all; it is entirely impossible to speak of the masterly way in which none of you did anything whatever.

But none of you did anything; you had no troops, no militia, no artillery, and your fleet was at the Island of St. Borondon, in the Atlantic. For those reasons, we won the great, and now historical, battle of Dorking.

I was at that battle in a very prominent position; in fact, I wear the order of the Goose and Gander (instituted by our present President, M. Mardi Prochaine) for my services there. I am of opinion, that if you had had any troops there, you would most certainly have won. As it was, you led us on, per ambages, until we saw your real line on Blackheath, where all the army were massing round the Queen.

Your artillery was right and left of us. I knew that it was all over as well as I did at Sedan. You, if you can remember as long ago as 1882, you will remember that I was captured in that cavalry charge by you. And you took me up to the Queen; and she said,

‘Will you give your parole not to serve against the English?’

And I said,

‘No; though I am married, your Majesty, I will not give that parole. Take me to Windsor dungeons.’

‘Let this officer go,’ said the Queen.

I went and fought again, and when our crowning disaster came at Farnham, I captured you; I let *you* go that time, for the sake of the best woman the world ever saw (that is, your Queen). I had a fight for you, you will remember, with Ducrot and Aurelles de Paladine; but you thought nothing of helping to hunt us back to the sea.

Be fair. I am only putting parallel cases. I conceived that I was right, and I think so now. Something happened, however, which, to a certain extent, delayed me. I think that I should have gone before, for I was nearly well. Still Marie and I sat in the sun so plea-

santly, that I thought I would wait a little longer.

She worked very well among the wounded, and then she came and sat, and read with me in the sun. And one night, I saw that she was ill, and I said :

‘ Let me get you a flower, darling ; will you have a lily ? ’

And she did a strange thing. She had learnt much English with these ladies, and they had lent her a book of Mr. Charles Kingsley’s, and she quoted from it :

‘ The song told me so long, long ago,
How a maid she chose the white lily ;
But the bride she chose the red, red rose,
And by its thorn died she.’

I got her a rose, a *Souvenir de Malmaison*. But she got worse ; and I went in to the two English ladies.

The taller of them looked at her, and she said :

‘ Carry her in for us ; you had better

sleep with that Chasseur to-night. Your arm will not want dressing; keep his arm moist, there is still some suppuration.'

'But what is the matter with Marie?' I asked.

'Well,' said the taller English lady, 'you will be a father or a widower before to-morrow morning—possibly both.'

I went to bed as I was told, for I had full faith in those two ladies. I went to bed with the Chasseur, and at proper intervals watered his hand with a small English watering-pot. It was a damp business, and I, as a rule, prefer to sleep dry. *Mais que voulez-vous? La guerre, c'est toujours la guerre.* Also and furthermore, my bed-fellow was a very strong young man, of the province of Brittany, and he stunk like all the—— I beg a thousand pardons, it is my first *bêtise*; he did not smell quite so nice as you do.

I object also, that the English ladies did not come to me as soon as they might

have done. My Chasseur did not smell as Chasseurs—nay, as all of us—should. I was dozing off with a most grand theory of stinks in my head. I had nearly done the first volume, when I found that I was awakened by a woman. I immediately wrote a whole volume on smells. Then I rose in bed (I did not happen to have many clothes on), and the Chasseur cursed me violently in the Biscayan language, which I do not in the least degree understand.

I sat up in bed as far as decency would allow, and I saw the taller English lady before me, with a naked child in her arms. With a wild recollection of a certain passage in Rabelais, I said :

‘Madam, do you know what you are doing with the little infant?’

‘Sir,’ she said, ‘this little baby is yours.’

How I could possibly have launched into the world a small specimen of a man, who was so small that it would fit into

the English lady's hand, I could not understand. I quite submitted. I saw my wife's eyes in his head, and I said:

‘Give him to me.’

‘For an hour only you will remain,’ said the English lady.

So the Chasseur and I got the baby between us in bed. It was not very big, and we turned down the clothes, and let the baby play between us.

That it was the most astounding baby ever seen, I need not say. He—not born ten hours—put his little fingers into that Chasseur's beard, in a way which would astonish you. It does not much matter, however.

In the middle of the night I had to take the child across the road, and lay it to Marie's breast.

When you have done that, you have done most things. Well, I am going to conclude. I cannot say how sorry I am to part with you, but one man does not happen to

be ten (this is exactly the place to say that Wellington said that Napoleon was 30,000 men. This is exactly the place to begin the argument. I assert that I am not ten men, but that Wellington was quite right in saying that Napoleon was 30,000. In my opinion he was more). I only say that I am not by any means ten men. If I had been, I should have told you all about the affray before Orleans.

I was with Marie for a month after the baby was born. I was absolutely free, and I did not leave her till I was fit to go. Then I went to D'Aurelles de Paladine, and he sent me south to meet Ricciotti Garibaldi at Dijon.

I met Ricciotti Garibaldi in England, and he said to me quite what I knew before. The French were utterly demoralised. They could not meet the Germans. They went out of the end of a field as soon as the Germans came in at the other end. 'We could not make them fight,' said Ricciotti

to me; 'and if the family of Garibaldi can't make men fight, who can?'

Let me lay down on the grave of a dead man one little wreath. I am an Orleanist. I love the name of the family. I would go to the devil for the Duc D'Aumale, and as I write the news comes to me that the Duc de Guise is dead. Is God going to plague us for ever for the sins of that scoundrel Orleans? Why does God smite the first-born of France like this? What have we done, I beg of you? It seems to me, speaking as an Orleanist, that God is not just to France. He took the Prince de Condé, now He takes the Duc de Guise. Is God going to stamp France into the dirt?

Marie says 'No,' He is going to do nothing of the kind. She says that there will rise a regenerated France, under the house of Orleans, at the sound of whose mouth all the earth will tremble. And Marie says also a very strange thing. She says that no nation will trust France again.

I asked why France was not to be trusted again.

‘Because she has the revolution behind her; and no nation dare face a revolution save England.’

‘Why England?’

‘Because England has done her duty by the people, and the Queen has helped her.’

She had her ideas, this young woman.

I beg you to observe that under the Emperor of Germany’s own signature I was no prisoner. Hetmold did his spiriting well. I was in Metz before the capitulation; and what is more to the purpose, I got out of it *before* the capitulation, with intelligence. O, my dear Von Alvensleben, I wonder what you would say to *that*. Dear Von Alvensleben, you don’t in the least degree think it possible that a young Alsatian who could talk German as well as yourself, would strip a young drummer who happened to be accidentally dead, and put on his clothes; you never thought of that,

General Von Alvensleben. But I did that same thing, and the place where I did it was within ten minutes' walk of Malmaison.

When everything came to an end before Orleans, I fancied myself a lost man. Three years in Prussia was the least thing I had to undergo.

I beg to remark to you that my parole was given without my asking for it. Now I was ordered to Sedan, and to Sedan I went.

'Is my father's house standing?' I said to Le Rose of the 'Europe.'

'It is standing, and your father's there,' said Le Rose.

I went out. The wrong had been righted. One had died since the battle; so what did it matter? I went to my own father's house, and knocked.

The door was opened by my own wife. O, that pressure of breast to breast! It seemed to me now that the child had come, there was a new love more glorious than

the old one. We were in one another's arms for one moment only.

I heard my father say, 'Let them be alone together for a little,' and then I heard a furious knocking at the door, just when my wife's bosom was on my breast.

I opened it. Mère Mathilde and Jacques Cartier were there, pursued, they said, by the Carbonari. While I was parleying with them, the door still open, a wounded wolf dashed in among us as we stood in the hall, and looking round upon us came and lay at my feet.

Marie said to me, 'O, Valentin, the poor dog is dead.'

'The wolf to the wehr wolf,' said Mère Mathilde; 'save us, save us, in God's name.'

They were suddenly upon us like fiends. The Prussians were not within a quarter of a mile. It was a matter of revolvers, and we were unarmed. I fought like a Frenchman with a poker, and Jacques Cartier did all he could; but this deadly sin of *talking*

had been committed by us against the Carbonari, and we were doomed. Mère Mathilde fell dead first, and then my mother went down. My father wrested a revolver from a man before we were hunted into the dining-room, and found five barrels loaded. Jacques Cartier fought with a chair. My father did splendid service by carefully shooting five men, but his valour was of no use, for he was shot himself, and very dangerously. Jacques Cartier was hit twice. All was going badly with us, and Marie had suddenly given me what she thought was the last kiss in this world, when we heard that awful

HALT!

It was the Prussians. The Carbonari were hemmed into the hall, and a volley was poured in on them. When the volley had had its effect, the Prussians ran in. My father was confronted by a solemn young officer in his own dining-room.

‘You keep pretty order in the conquered provinces, sir,’ said my father.

‘We cannot undertake to keep order with the Carbonari, sir.’

‘I suppose not, sir. But my wife is killed in consequence of your negligence.’

‘Gott in Himmel,’ said the young officer. ‘Let us look, dear M. Schneider.’

Mère Mathilde was dead, but my mother was not. She was shot through the thigh and through the deltoid muscles, but she was not dead at all. In fact, she is alive now.

One ugly thing happened at the very last. One of the wounded Carbonari had been disarmed by the Prussians, but he had a little American pistol concealed on him. Jacques Cartier approached him to give him some water, and he said, ‘Foul hound and traitor,’ and he shot him through the heart.

That is all I have to say of Sedan.

THE END.

February 1872.

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